

Les Cités obscures

SCHUITEN

PEETERS

L'ENFANT PENCHÉE



Lès Cités obscures

SCHUITEN

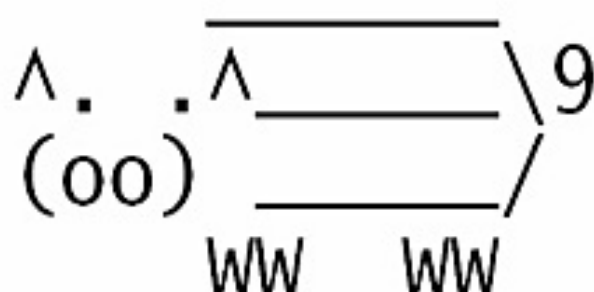
PEETERS

The Leaning Child

Photographs by Marie-Francoise Plissart featuring Martin Vaughn-James

casterman

MAUS IS IN DA HAUS



A Wheelchair Warez production

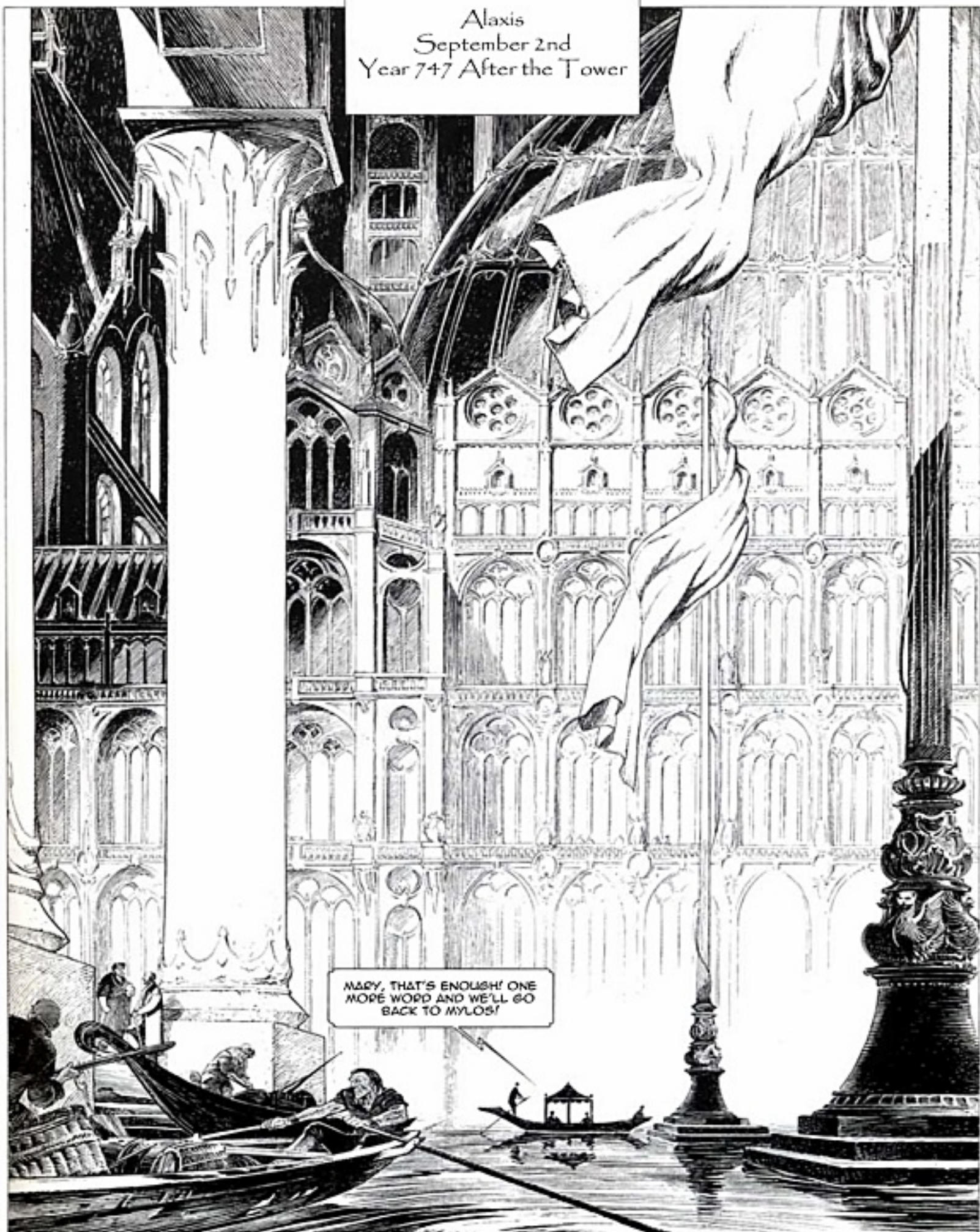
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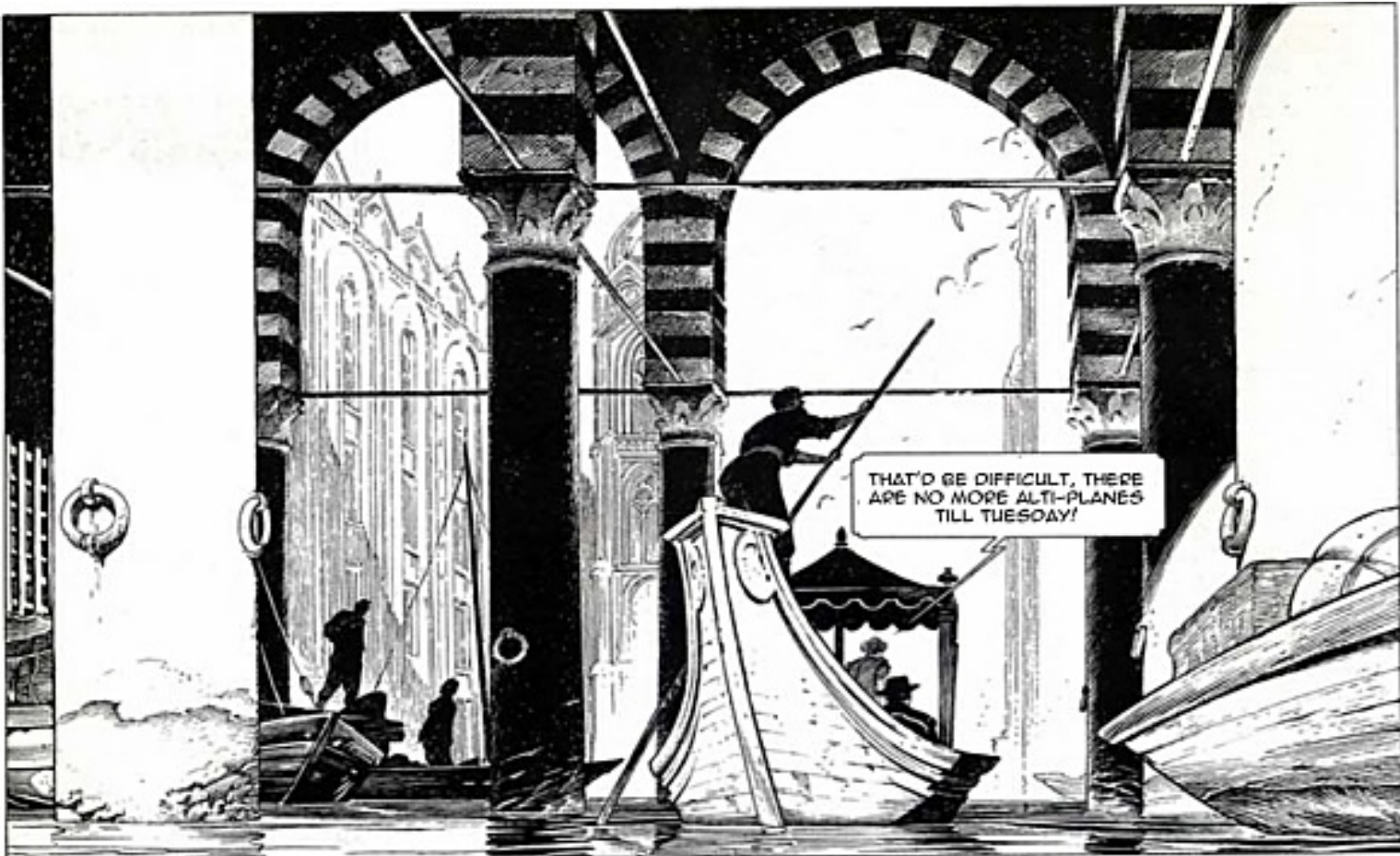
Scans of original French album: Presumably some random French guy

Translation: Joe Johnson
(with some minor corrections/changes by yours truly)

Lettering: Wheelchair Warez / Nicolai

Alaxis
September 2nd
Year 747 After the Tower





THAT'D BE DIFFICULT, THERE
ARE NO MORE ALTI-PLANES
TILL TUESDAY!



THAT GIRL... IS GOING TO DRIVE ME MAD!



CALM DOWN, ROSA, YOU KNOW IT
DOESN'T DO ANY GOOD.

WE SHOULD HAVE NEVER RUSHED
INTO THIS TRIP. A THREE-DAY
JOURNEY TO GET LOST HERE IN
THE CROWDS...



COME LOOK, PAPA!

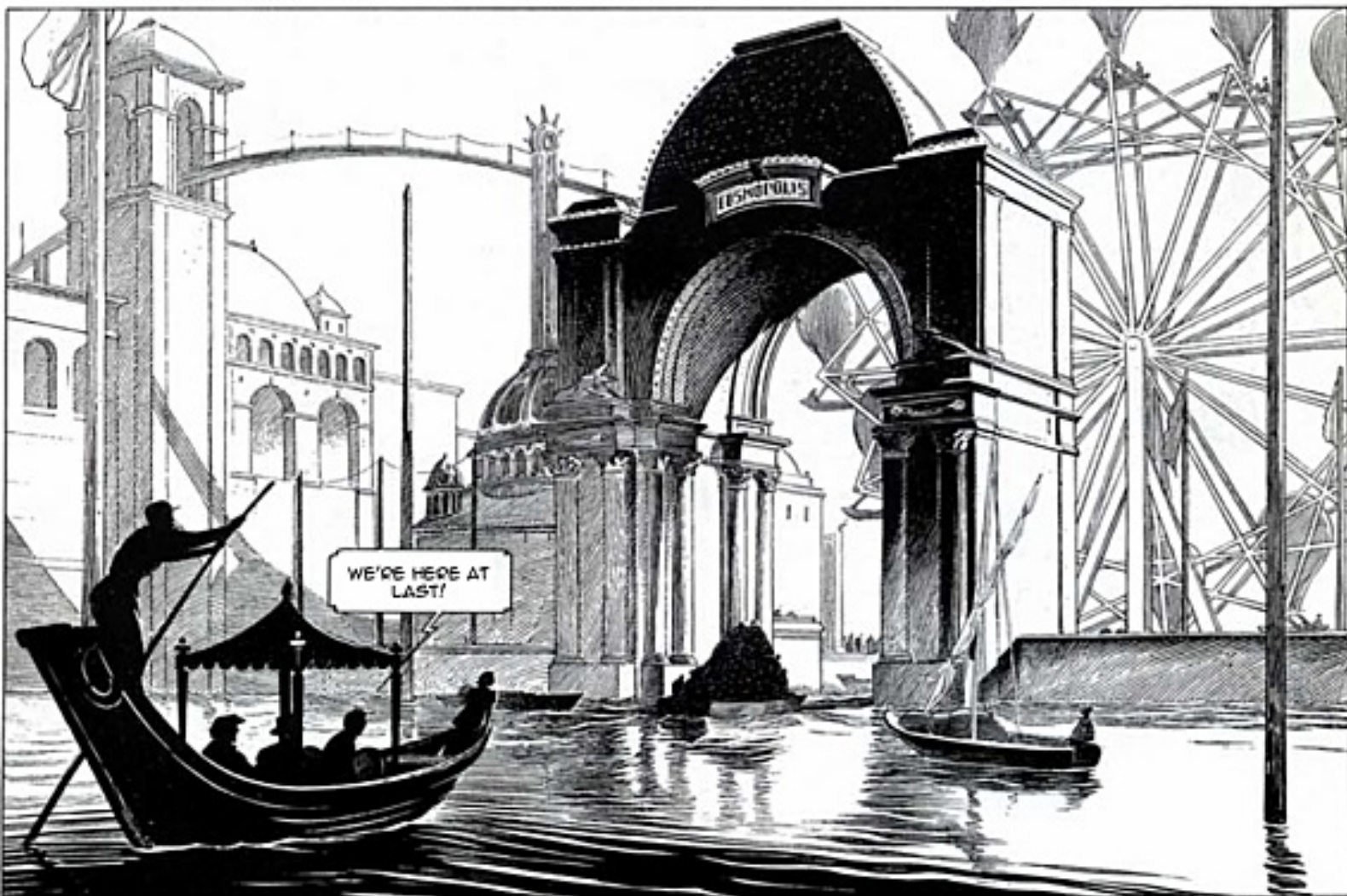
IF WE'D ONLY JUST BROUGHT
KURT! IT REALLY OUGHT TO HAVE
BEEN JUST THE TWO OF YOU TO
GO... TRIPS AREN'T GOOD FOR ME.
I'M TOO FRAGILE.

PAPA!

DID YOU SEE THAT GIRL? SHE'S BEAUTIFUL, EH?

THERE'S SO MANY PEOPLE ON THAT BOAT!
HOW CAN THEY STAND IT?

IN ANY CASE, THEY'RE HAVING A
BETTER TIME THAN WE ARE!





NOW PAY ATTENTION! AND MOST
OF ALL, LET'S ALL STAY
TOGETHER!



EXCUSE ME, LADIES
AND GENTLEMEN!

FLOWERS FOR THE LITTLE GIRL?

MARSHMALLOWS, CARAMELS, BARLEY SUGAR!

ALL RIGHT ALREADY, LET
US BY!



DO YOU SEE, KURT, TWO THINGS DRIVE MEN
MAD: MONEY AND AMBITION.

YES, PAPA.



DID YOU SEE THE WAY HE LOOKS? IT'S INCREDIBLE!

WHY DO THEY LET TRASH LIKE THAT
RUN LOOSE?



THE STAR EXPRESS, IT LOOKS BIZARRE!

ACCORDING TO THE GUIDEBOOK, IT'S THE MOST SPECTACULAR ATTRACTION.

"AN UNFORGETTABLE VOYAGE TO THE STARS... AN EXPERIENCE THAT WILL BLOW YOU AWAY YOU"... HMM.

VERY FUNNY!



MARY, STAY HERE!



REALLY, IT'S JUST AMAZING. SHE'S ALWAYS UP TO SOMETHING NEW EVERY TIME.

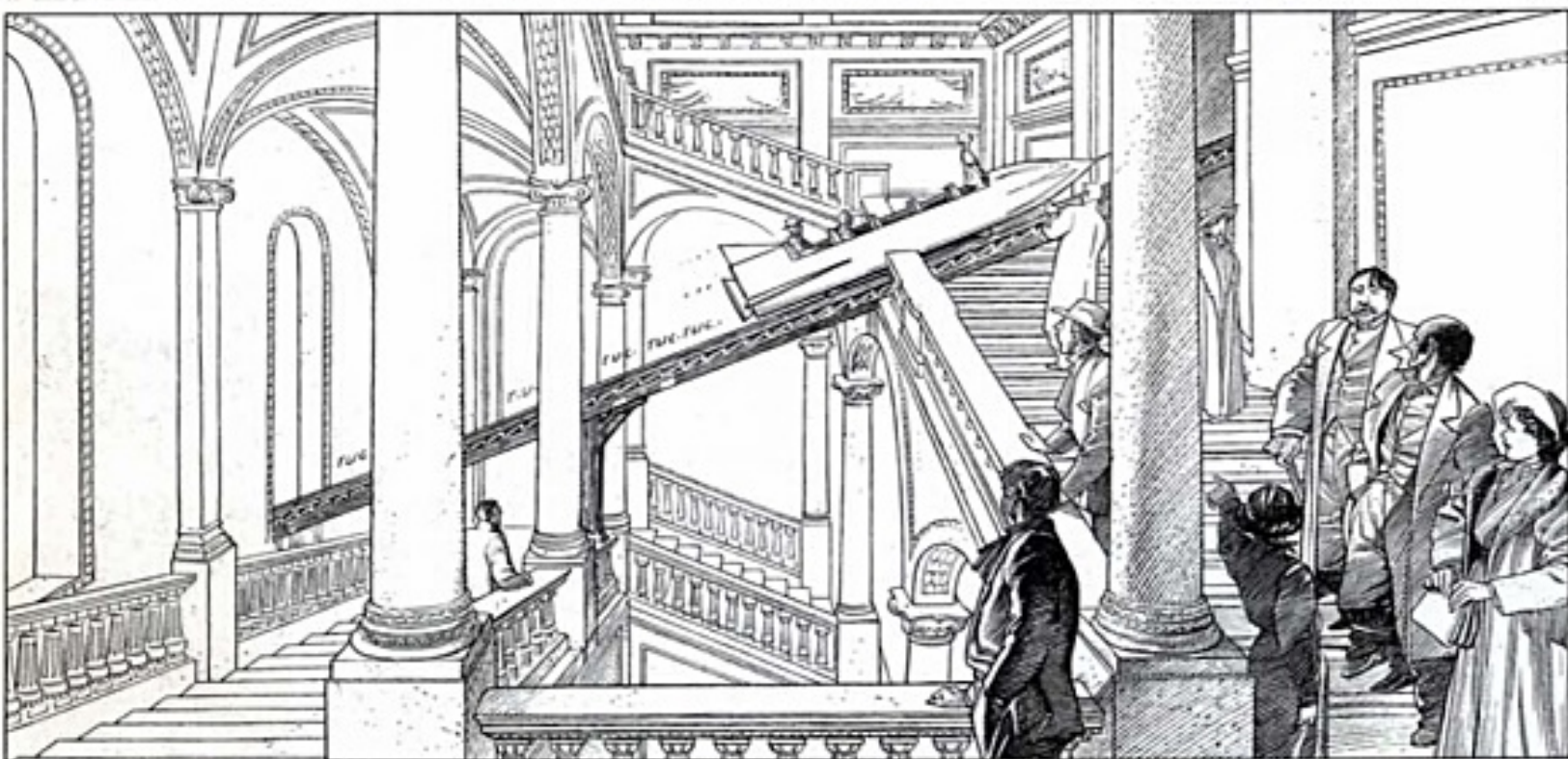
THREE ADULTS AND A CHILD.



MARY, SIT DOWN, IT'S GOING TO TAKE OFF!

IT'S A BIT SILLY, NO DOUBT, BUT IT'LL MAKE THE KIDS
HAPPY.

WE'LL JUST SEE



OH MY, I DON'T LIKE THIS AT ALL.

DON'T GET UPSET, ROSA, IT'LL BE ALL RIGHT.





E-E-E-E-E

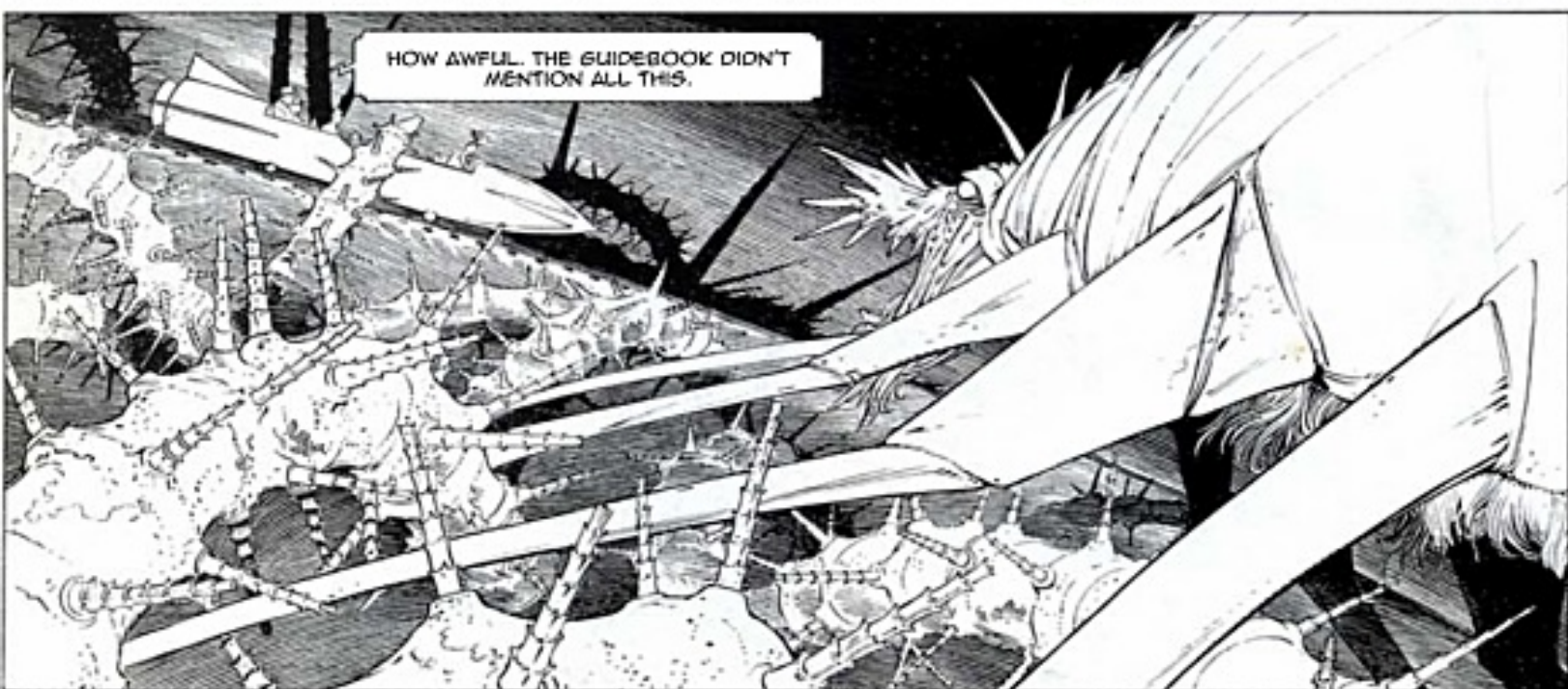
THE PLANET
ANTINEA!



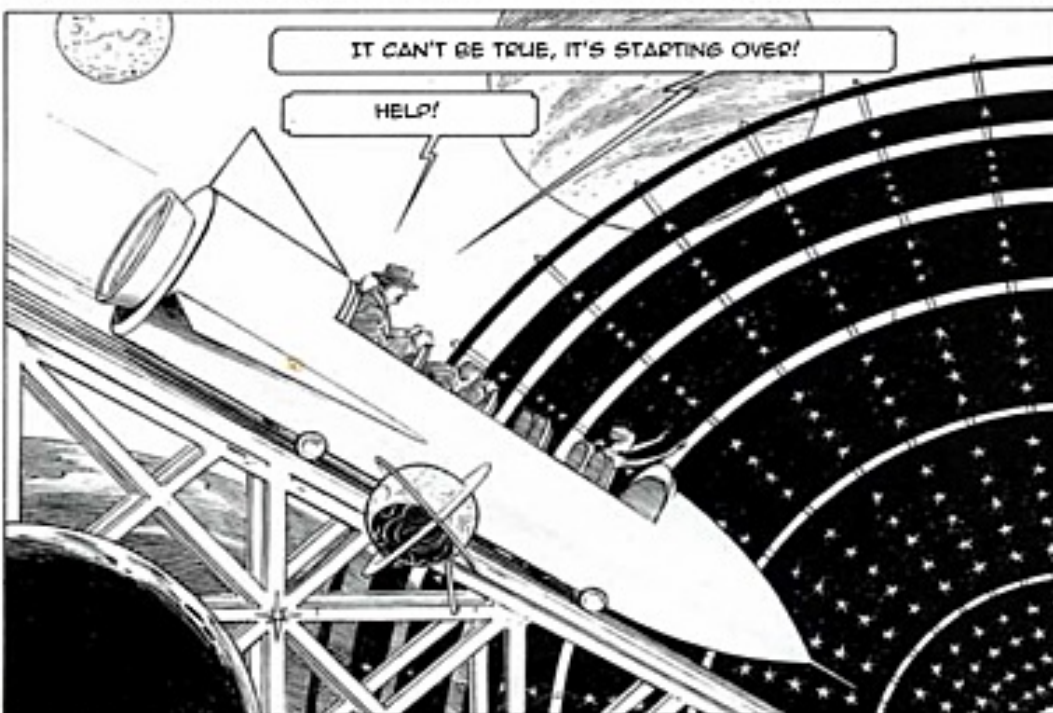
THE RED GIANT!

I THINK IT'S
ALMOST OVER.

I'M GOING
TO DIE...

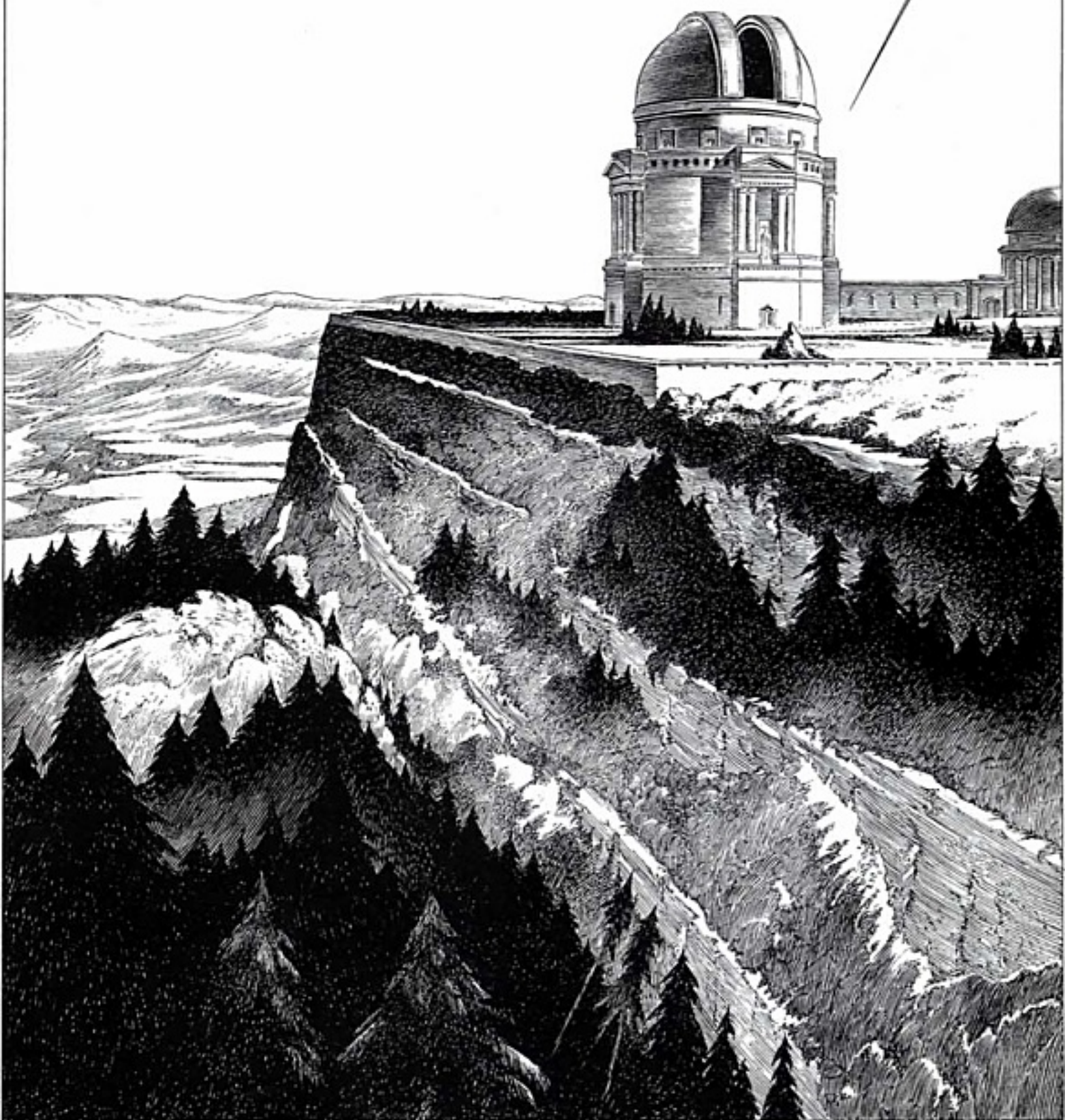


HOW AWFUL. THE GUIDEBOOK DIDN'T
MENTION ALL THIS.



Mount Michelson
September 2nd
15:50

DEAR COLLEAGUES, I REGRET ADMITTING
MY DISAPPOINTMENT...



FOR THE THREE MONTHS THAT I'VE BEEN WITH YOU, WE HAVEN'T PROGRESSED AN INCH IN THE CLARIFICATION OF THAT WHICH OUGHT TO HAVE LONG BEEN OUR PRIORITY: THE EXPLORATION OF THE STARS SURROUNDING US.



I'M SET IN MY CONVICTION: OUR PATHS MUST SEPARATE. I WILL CONTINUE MY RESEARCH ALONE, WITH MY POOR MEANS, AS I HAVE ALWAYS DONE.



MR. WAPPENDORF, ALLOW ME TO EXPRESS MY COMPLETE DISAGREEMENT! WE ONLY CALLED UPON YOU SHORTLY AFTER THE BRUSEL DISASTER TO PERFECT ONE OF OUR TELESCOPES...



HAVING TAKEN A PASSION FOR STAR-BAZING, YOU WANTED TO REDIRECT OUR PROJECTS IN THIS NEW PATH. WE ACCEPTED DEVELOPING A PROGRAM WITH YOU, DIVERTING OURSELVES FROM OUR CUSTOMARY RESEARCH OBJECTIVES. DON'T BE IN SUCH A HURRY! SCIENCE IS A MATTER OF PATIENCE.

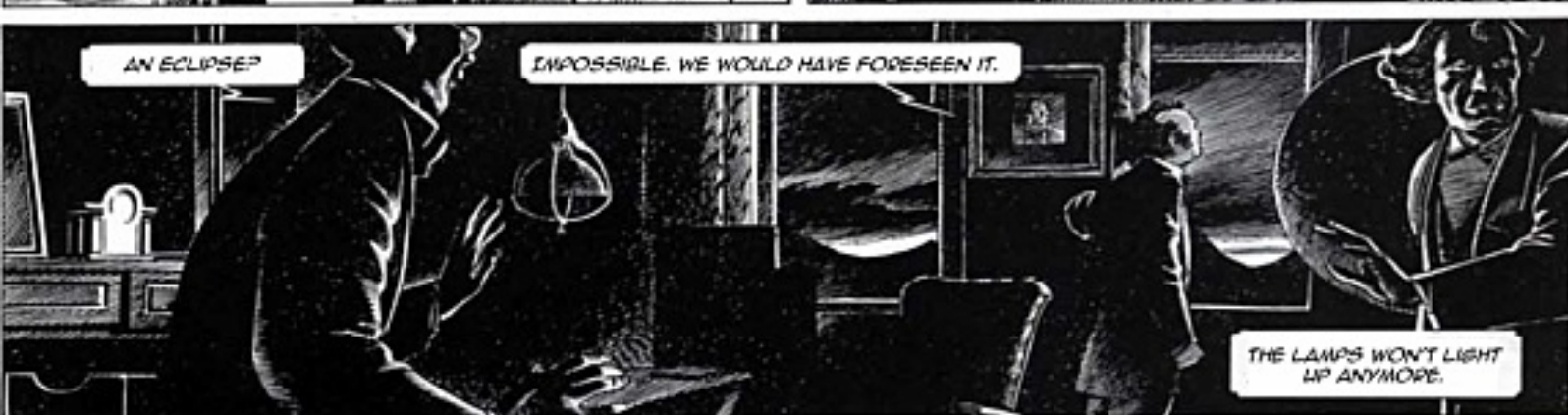
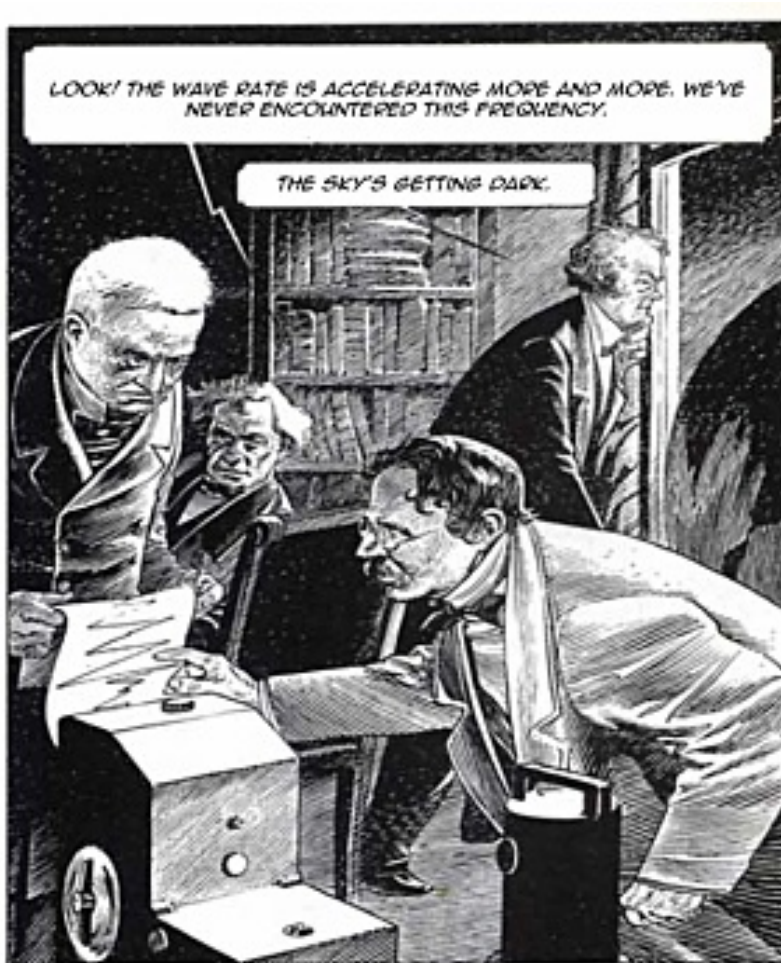


TIME IS PRESSING, GENTLEMEN. I WOULD LIKE TO NOT DIE BEFORE SEEING MY HYPOTHESES CONFIRMED. DIDN'T MICHEL ARDAN CALCULATE...

GENTLEMEN!

MICHEL ARDAN IS A FAKE.







Alaxis
September 2nd
16:05

BUT THIS IS UNBELIEVABLE,
THEY'RE CRAZY...

LOOK! IT'S ALL DARK OUTSIDE,
TOO.







DO YOU SEE THAT,
PAPA? IT'S FUNNY.

IT'S WEIRD, WHEN I TURN AROUND, I'M
LEANING IN THE OTHER DIRECTION!

IT'S INCREDIBLE...
AN EXTRAORDINARY
PHENOMENON...



AND YET, THERE'S NO TRICK...

TRY HARDER, STAND UP STRAIGHT! YOU'RE
MAKING US LOOK RIDICULOUS.

SHE'LL DO ANYTHING TO GET
ATTENTION.



IT'S FUNNY, HUM?

LET'S GO HOME! IN TWO DAYS,
IT'LL PASS.



KURT, TODAY'S LESSON IS THAT
FRIVOLITY IS WORTHLESS TO US. THE
VON RATHEN ARE MADE FOR WORKING.



The High Plateaus
of Aubrac
October 28th, 1898





*The first snow of the year fell tonight, making Thubrac even barer than it was.
I walked for more than three hours without encountering a single soul.*



*What a joy being here, far from merchants and critics! The imbeciles. They 'll not be seeing my
paintings any time soon. "Deimbres and his bizarre imagination" won't bother them anymore.*





I don't know why this rock has struck me so. It's almost spherical form perhaps! In spite of the glacial wind, I've gotten it in my head to draw it



My good teacher Jerome would scream if he were to see me here, sketching out a design of a big stone. And to top it off, I had to get a grip on myself to get it in line!

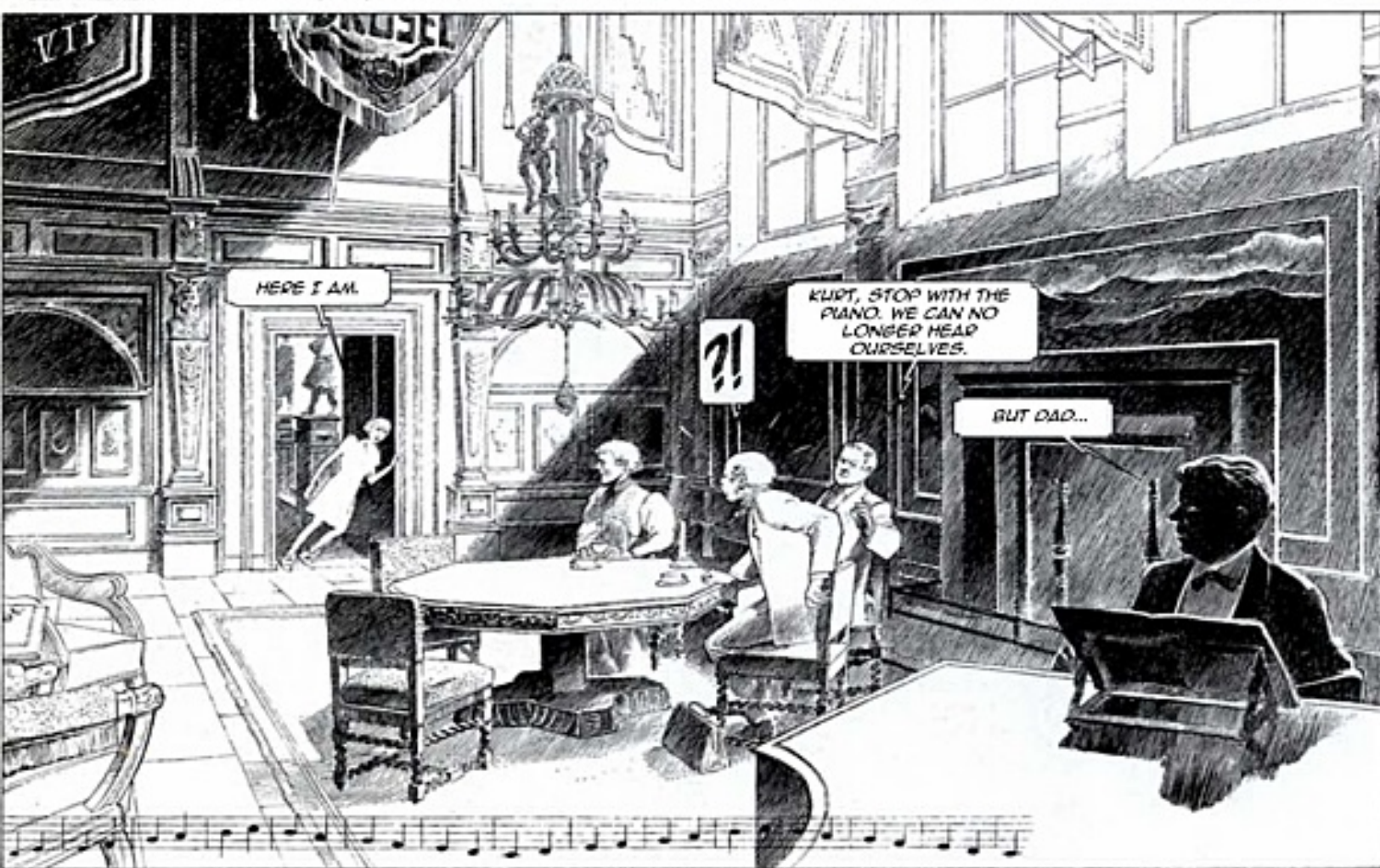


MYLOS
September 26th, 747

MARY! MARY!

ALL RIGHT... I'M
COMING.







HMM... COME, MARY, LIE DOWN!
WE'RE GOING TO TAKE YOUR
TEMPERATURE.



SO, YOU CAME UP WITH A GOOD
IDEA TO NOT GO TO SCHOOL?..

AAAAAA...



SHE DOESN'T HAVE A FEVER...

WHAT DID I SAY! I WAS SURE THAT
IT WAS ALL AN ACT.



AND YET THERE IS SOMETHING, IT'S
UNDENIABLE.

I DON'T HURT AT ALL. EXCEPT IN
MY FEET...



YOU KNOW, IT DOESN'T REALLY SURPRISE
ME... THIS CHILD HAS NEVER BEEN VERY
EVEN-KEELED.

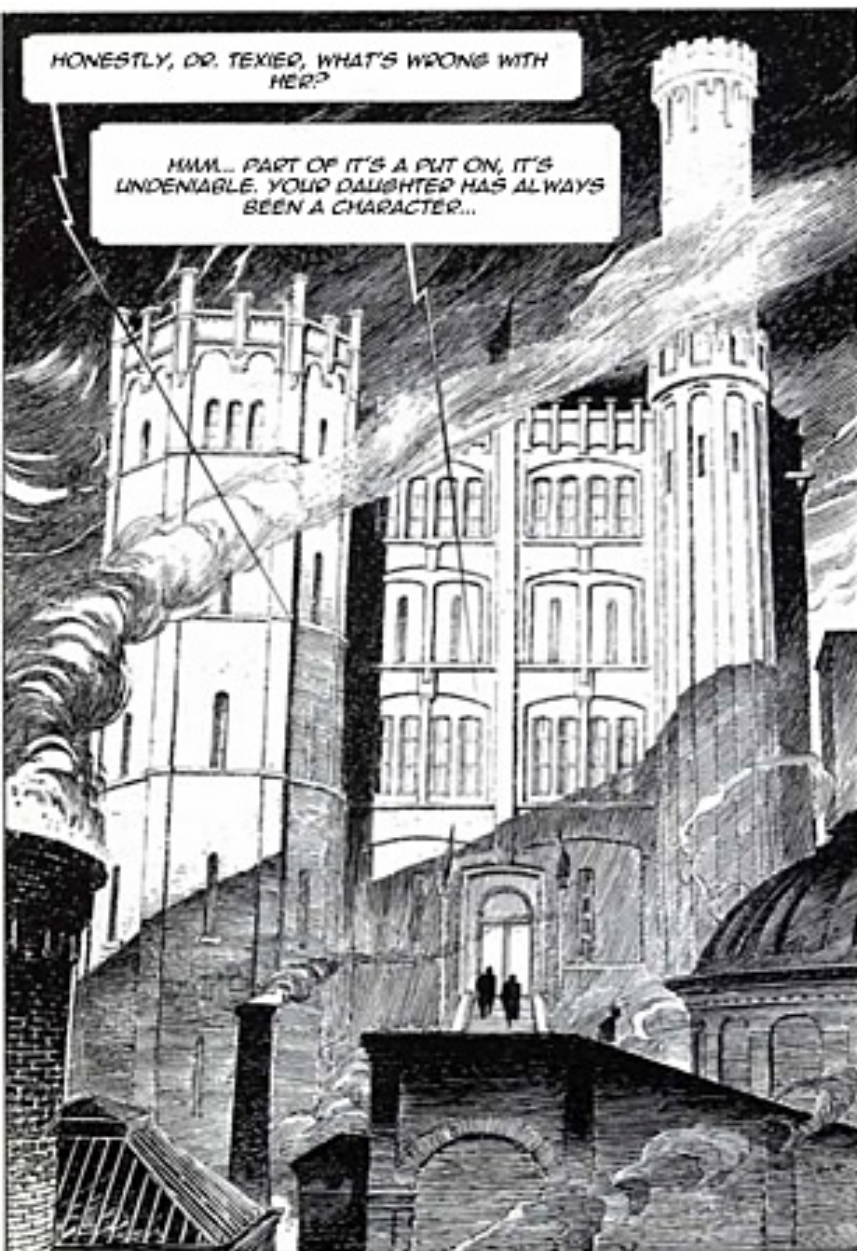


THAT'S FINE, MARY, YOU CAN GET
DRESSED AGAIN... MR. VON RATHEN,
I'D LIKE TO SEE YOU FOR A
MOMENT.

HONESTLY, DR. TEXIER, WHAT'S WRONG WITH HER?

HMM... PART OF IT'S A PUT ON, IT'S UNDENIABLE. YOUR DAUGHTER HAS ALWAYS BEEN A CHARACTER...

BUT WE'LL ALSO HAVE TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE CLIMATIC CONDITIONS OF MYLOS AND GROWTH PROBLEMS... THE FIRST STAGE OF OSTEOPOROSIS IS NOT TO BE EXCLUDED.

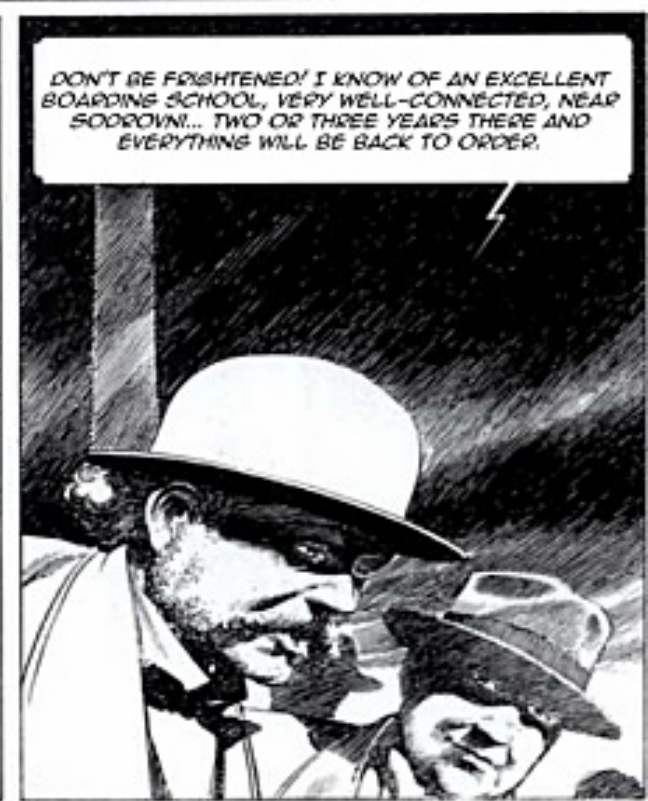


WE COULD OF COURSE THINK ABOUT A CORRECTIVE CORSET AND A VITAMIN CURE... BUT I THINK THE BEST DAY FOR NOW WOULD BE A CHANGE OF AIR... THE COUNTRY, THAT'S WHAT!

THE COUNTRY?!

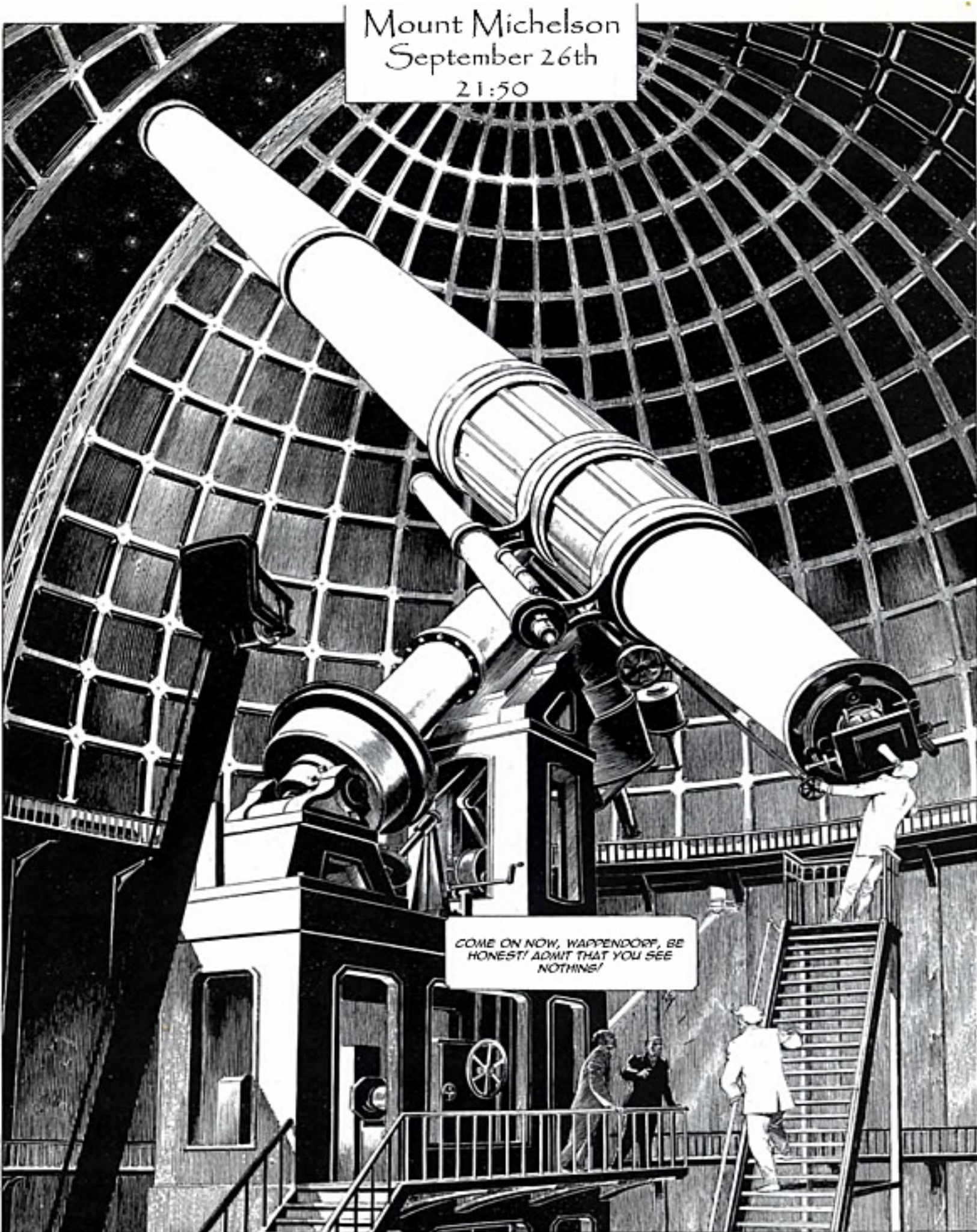


DON'T BE FRIGHTENED! I KNOW OF AN EXCELLENT BOARDING SCHOOL, VERY WELL-CONNECTED, NEAR SOOROVNI... TWO OR THREE YEARS THERE AND EVERYTHING WILL BE BACK TO ORDER.





Mount Michelson
September 26th
21:50



COME ON NOW, WAPPENDORF, BE
HONEST! ADMIT THAT YOU SEE
NOTHING!

COMING FROM A MAN LIKE YOU, THIS RESPONSE DISAPPOINTS ME IN THE EXTREME. SCIENCE, MR. CHLOWSKY, HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE VISIBLE, BUT RATHER THE INVISIBLE.

OH!!



ENOUGH THEORIZING, WAPPENDORF! THE FACTS!

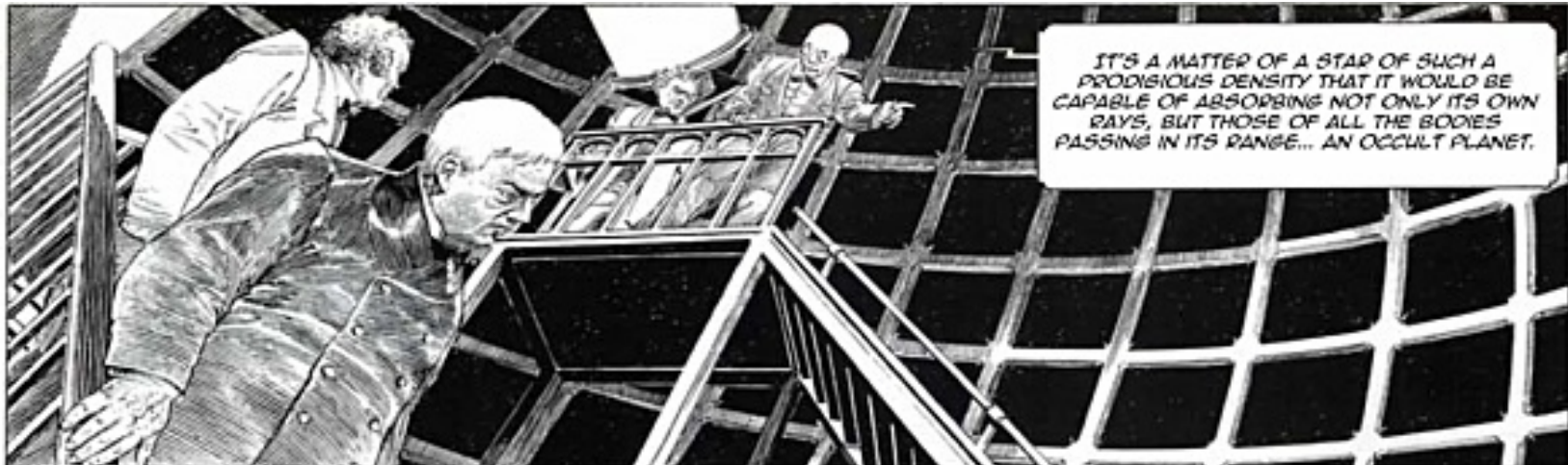
THE LUMINOUS PHENOMENON WHICH WE WITNESSED THREE WEEKS AGO HAD ALL THE CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ECLIPSE, EXCEPT THAT NO STAR WAS VISIBLE...



BUT THIS STAR THAT WE ARE UNABLE TO OBSERVE: EVERYTHING IS LEADING US TO DEDUCT ITS EXISTENCE, AND THE AUTHORITIES GATHERED HERE SHOULD EVEN PERMIT US TO CALCULATE ITS POSITION AND ITS MASS.



WE CAN MEASURE ITS EFFECTS, STUDY THE FORCE FIELD THAT IN A SURE MANNER IMPLIES ITS EXISTENCE... YES, DEAR COLLEAGUES, ALL THE RECENT INCIDENTS LEAD TO THE FORMULATION OF THIS HYPOTHESIS...



IT'S A MATTER OF A STAR OF SUCH A PRODIGIOUS DENSITY THAT IT WOULD BE CAPABLE OF ABSORBING NOT ONLY ITS OWN RAYS, BUT THOSE OF ALL THE BODIES PASSING IN ITS RANGE... AN OCCULT PLANET.



ABSURD... UNLIKELY.



TO THE CONTRARY, IT'S INTERESTING... I HAVE BEEN THINKING ABOUT SOMETHING OF THE SORT FOR A LONG TIME.



IN ANY CASE, THE HYPOTHESIS MERTS STUDY.



GENTLEMEN, I THANK YOU. I KNEW THAT YOU WOULDN'T WISH TO TURN YOUR BACKS ON THE EXALTED ADVENTURE AT HAND.



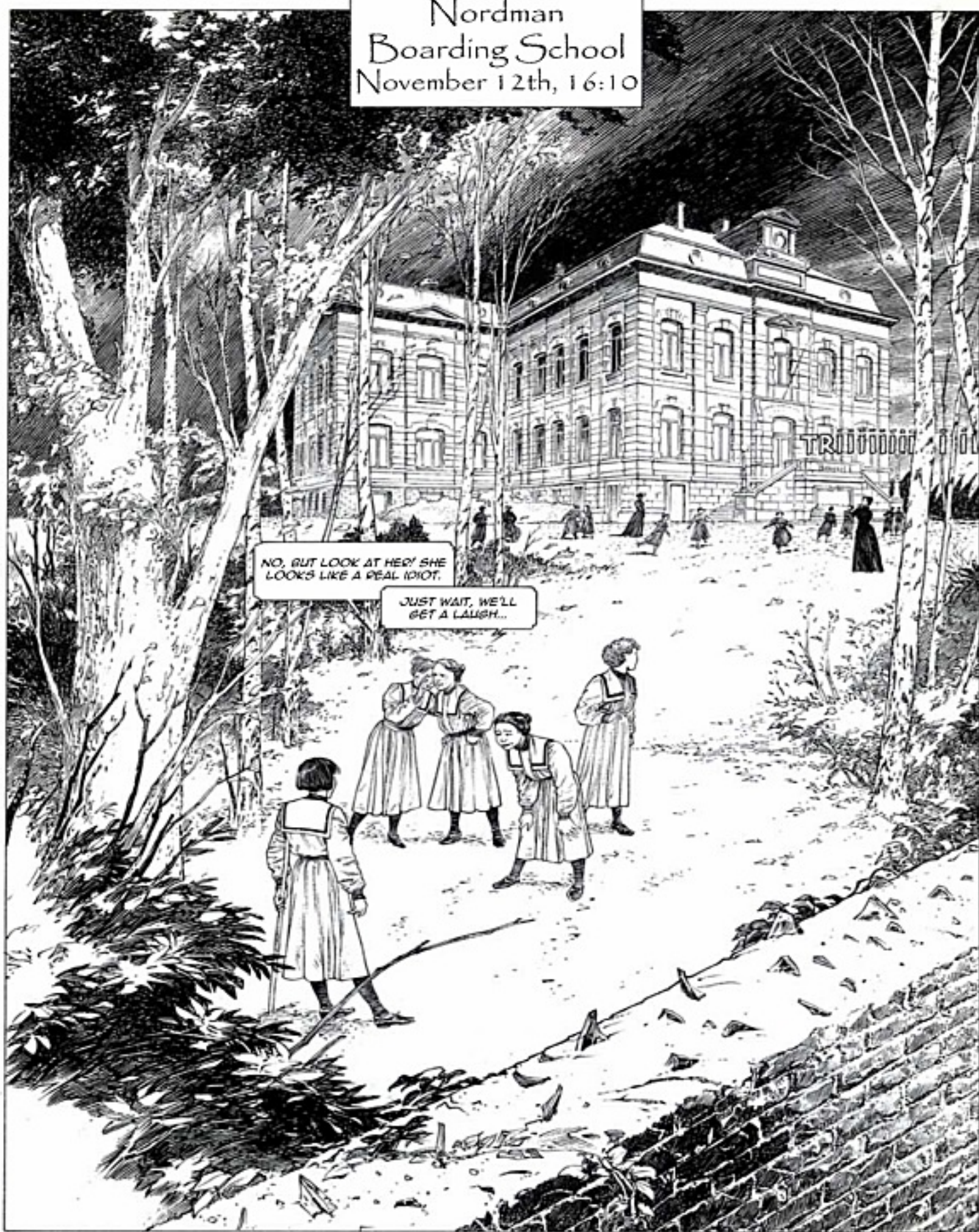
BECAUSE, DEAR FRIENDS, WE ARE GOING TO GET CLOSER TO THIS STAR.

TO GET CLOSER? BUT...



YES, TOGETHER WE ARE GOING TO CONSTRUCT AN ENGINE CAPABLE OF CARRYING US INTO SPACE... THE GREAT CELESTIAL DREAM IS GOING TO BECOME A REALITY.

Nordman
Boarding School
November 12th, 16:10



NO, BUT LOOK AT HER! SHE
LOOKS LIKE A REAL IDIOT.

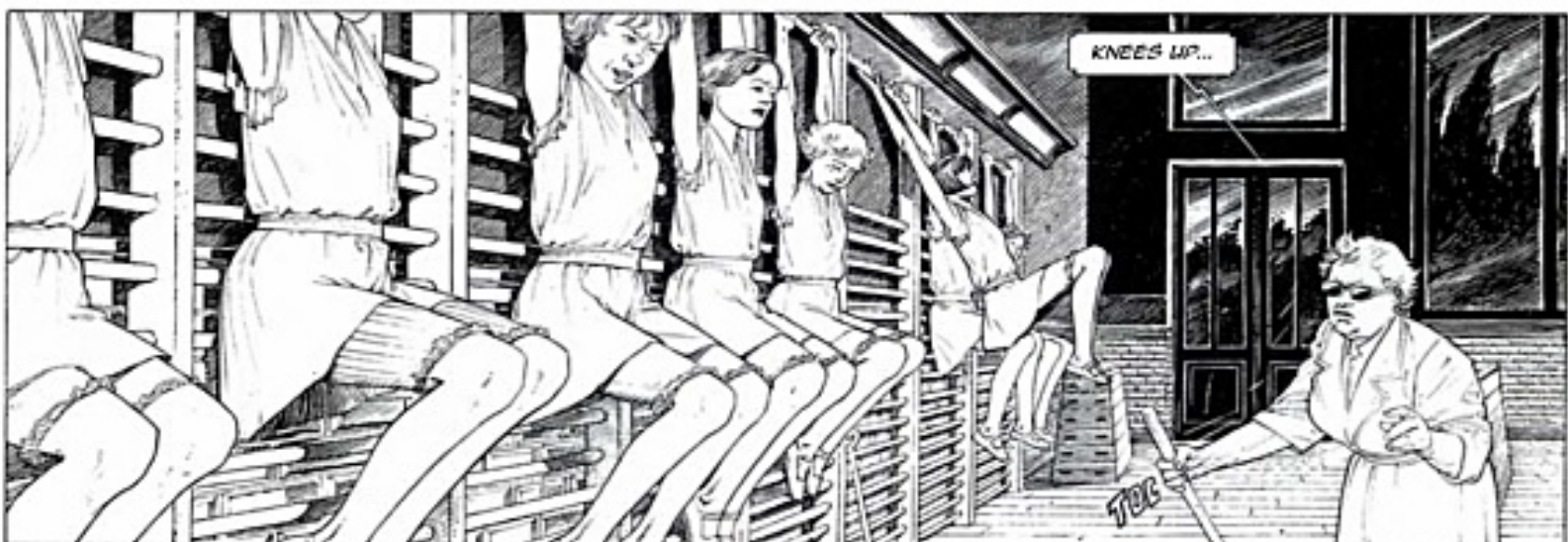
JUST WAIT, WE'LL
GET A LAUGH...



LATE AGAIN, VON RATHEN! REALLY, YOU ARE INCORRIGIBLE!



COME ON, GIRL, ENOUGH
DRAGGING! COME ON! TO
THE BARS!





I'VE NEVER LIKED WILLFUL ONES,
GIRL...



I HONESTLY WOULDN'T
ADVISE YOU TO KEEP IT
UP.



WE'RE STARTING TO GET TIRED OF YOU
HERE!



NEXT EXERCISE! TRY TO STAY CALM THIS
TIME!



COME ON, CAROLINE, STAND UP NOW!...
CHRISTINE, THAT'S VERY GOOD...



?!

VON RATHEN, YOU ARE COMPLETELY MAD. STOP THIS LITTLE GAME RIGHT NOW!



WE'LL MAKE YOU WALK STRAIGHT, GIRLIE, EVEN IF WE HAVE TO TIE YOU TO A BOARD.



GET DRESSED AGAIN RIGHT NOW AND GO STRAIGHT TO THE ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE!



YOU AGAIN, MARY VON RATHEN...



IN EVERY CLASS, YOU GET YOURSELF NOTICED! UP TILL NOW, WE HAVE BEEN VERY PATIENT WITH YOU, BUT YOU MUST RECOGNIZE THAT YOU HAVE GONE BEYOND THE LIMITS.



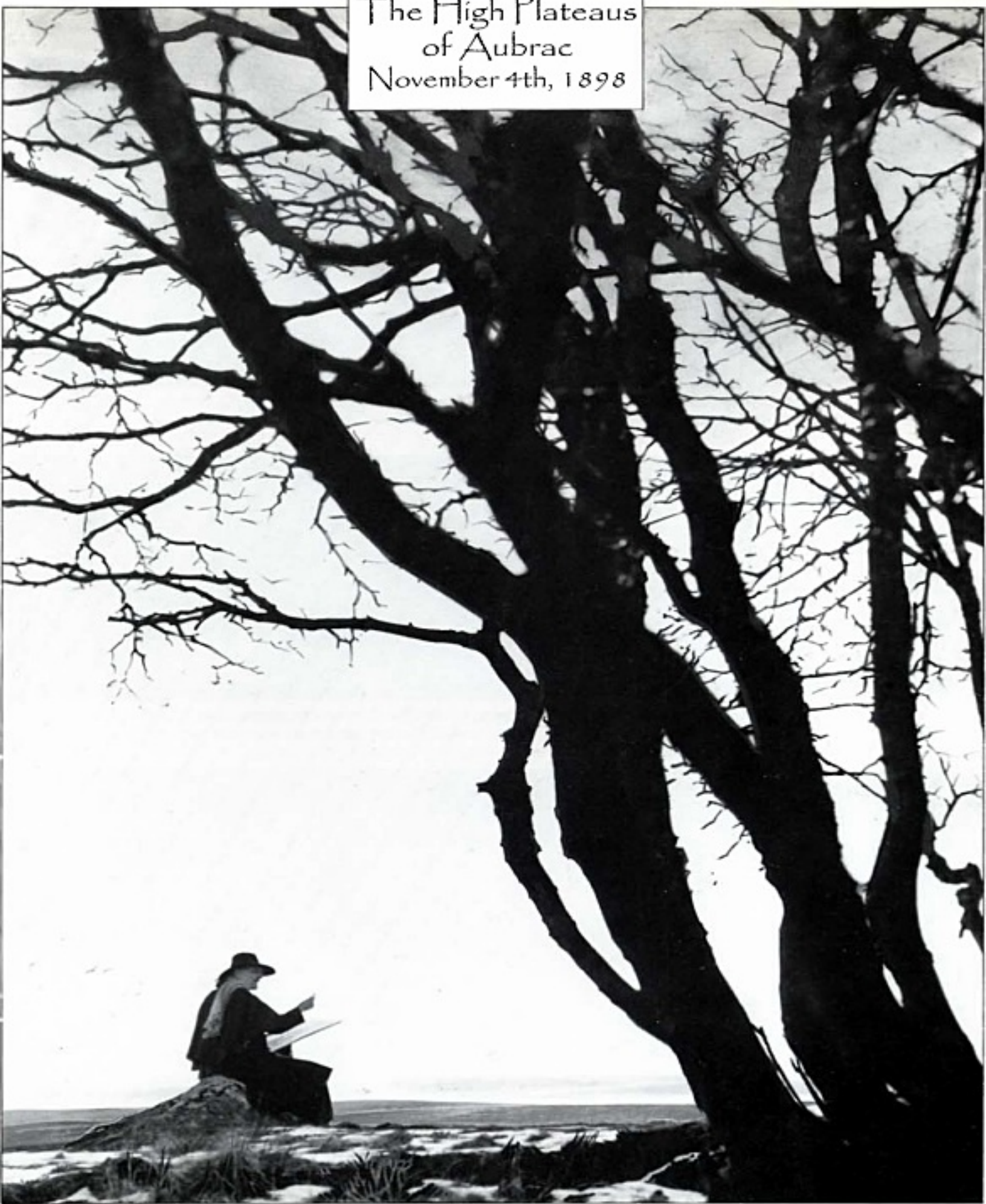
AN EXEMPLARY PUNISHMENT IS REQUIRED. I REGRET TO INFORM YOU, MARY VON RATHEN, THAT WE ARE GOING TO HAVE TO KEEP YOU HERE DURING THE NEXT SCHOOL VACATION.







The High Plateaus
of Aubrac
November 4th, 1898





Letter from Florence arrived this morning. She still thinks it 's that stupid article that made me leave... It 's curious how little she understands me...



My steps led me to an abandoned house, who ever would have been crazy enough to build such a gigantic residence in such an out of the way place?





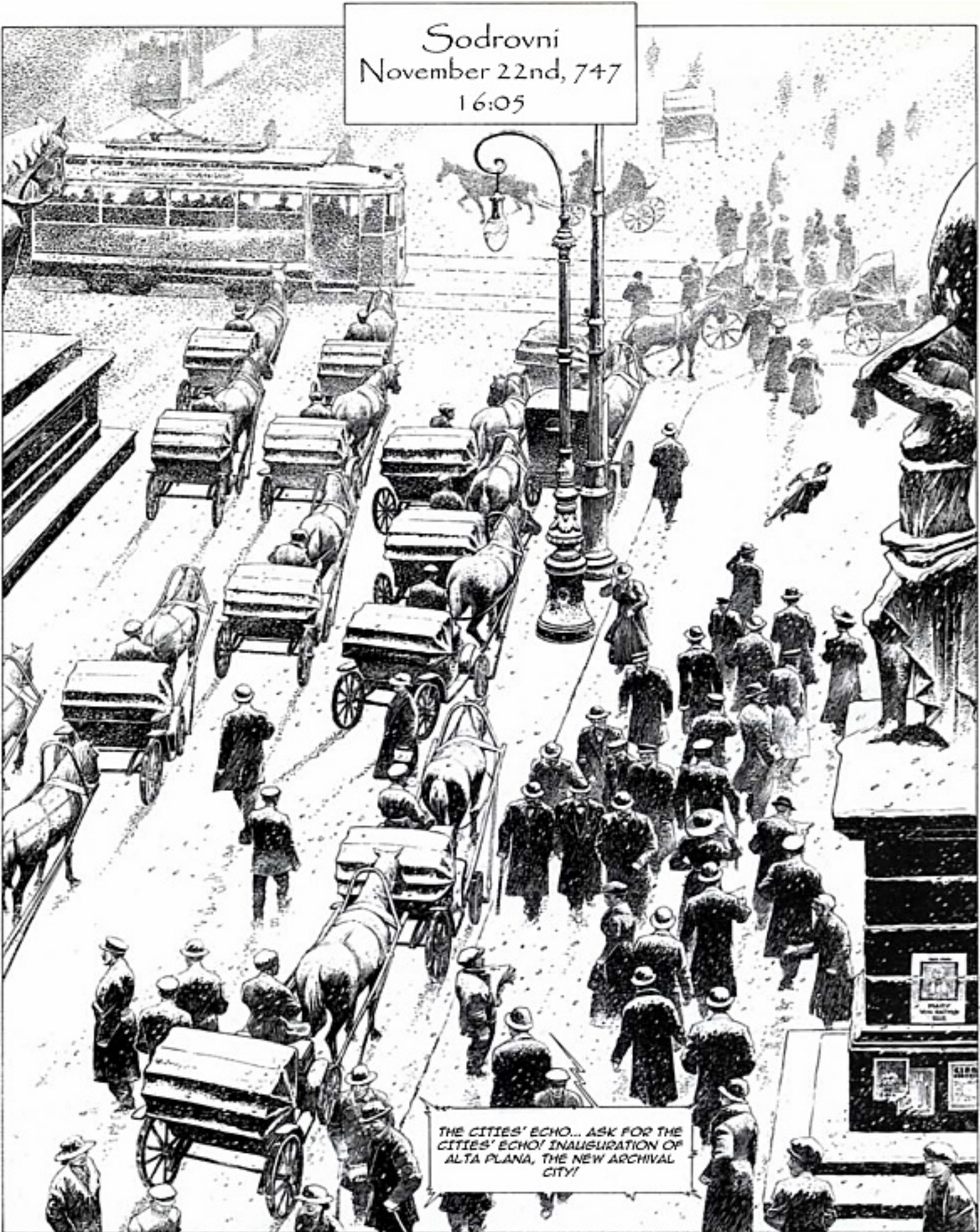
*I spent a good while about the house, trying to steal a look through the closed shutters.
Its proportions seem sublime.*

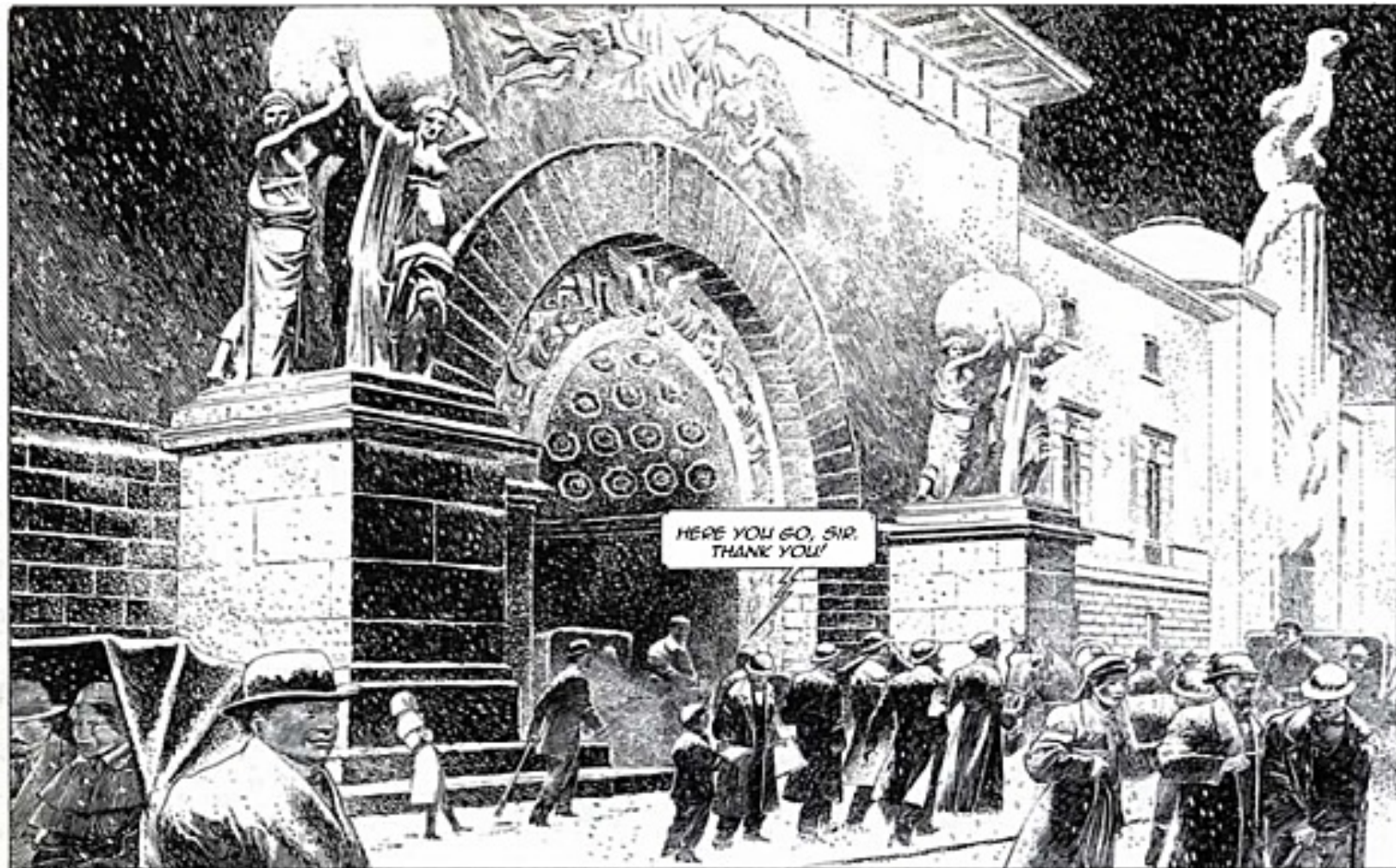


*It's as if this voyage, this long wandering had had no other end but to lead me here. Tomorrow,
I want to find out if it's possible to buy this building.*



Sodrovni
November 22nd, 747
16:05







YOUNG LADIES, I MUST ASK
FOR EXTRA CONCENTRATION
FROM YOU. IF NOT, YOU'LL
NEVER BE READY FOR THE
GOVERNOR'S VISIT...



SIR! SIR! LOOK!

WHO... WHAT? WHAT IS IT? WHO ELSE HAS COME TO DISTURB THE QUIET OF THIS WORKSHOP?

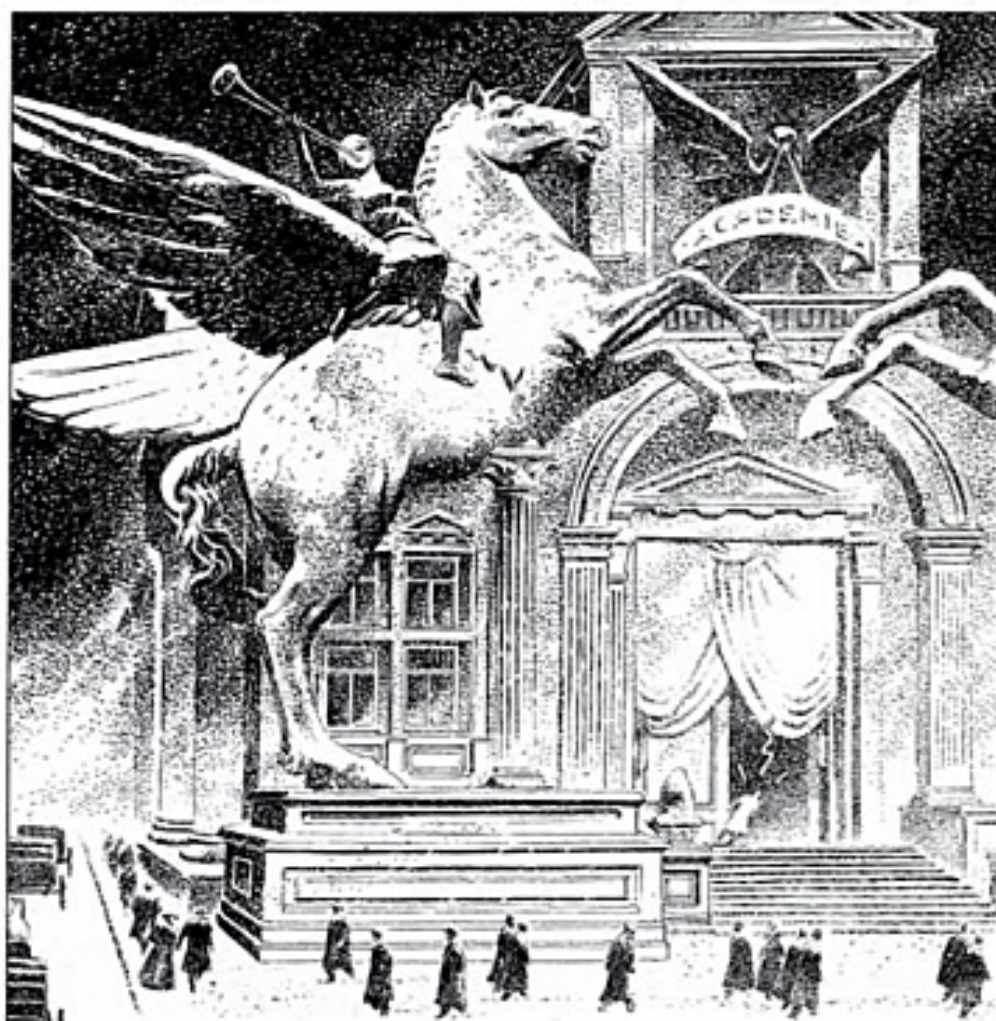
"VENUS AND THE BESSAR," IT WOULD BE A GREAT PAINTING...

...DON'T YOU THINK?

FEDOR, YOU HAVE ALWAYS HAD AN ATROCIOUS TASTE... YOU'LL NEVER BE MORE THAN A VILGAR FIREMAN!

HA, HA, HA!

AS FOR YOU, YOU LITTLE SCAMP, HURRY UP AND GET YOUR BUTT OUT OF HERE! THERE'S NO ROOM FOR YOU HERE, AND YOU'RE NOT OLD ENOUGH TO ROSE!





YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT,
THERE'S NOT ENOUGH
FOR US ANYWAYS!

THAT'S WEIRD! I'VE
NEVER SEEN
ANYTHING LIKE IT.





LIHH... HELLO, MR...

ROBERTSON... EDGAR ROBERTSON... IT'S STRANGE, EVER SINCE I SAW YOU IN THE ALAXIS PARK, I KNEW WE'D FIND ONE ANOTHER AGAIN.

HAVE A SEAT! MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME. LET ME INTRODUCE YOU TO OUR TROOP...

THARCISHIUS, OUR BUSINESSMAN...

PIERRE AND DANY, WHO NEVER DO ANYTHING HALFWAY...

MADAME ALEE, WHO PUTS THE LITTLE PLATES INTO THE BIG ONES...

...AND MR. RAOUL, WHOM YOU'VE ALREADY MET.

WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

MARY.

HOW BEAUTIFUL SHE IS!

EAT, MARY, YOU MUST BE HUNGRY... WE'LL WORRY ABOUT YOUR COSTUME LATER.

Mount Michelson
April 12th, 749
18:20

AXEL, YOU KNOW I'VE ALWAYS
SUPPORTED YOU, EVEN TO THE
POINT OF HAVING A FALL-OUT WITH
CHLOWSKY... BUT THIS TIME I MUST
INSIST!

A black and white comic panel showing two men on the deck of a ship. The man on the left is older, with white hair and a beard, wearing a light-colored jacket. The man on the right is bald with glasses, wearing a dark jacket. They are both looking towards the right. The background shows the ship's hull and rigging.

...SUPPOSING THAT THE CELESTIAL MISSILE
REACHES THE OCCULT PLANET WITHOUT
DAMAGE, NOTHING SAYS THAT WE COULD
GET BACK.

GET BACK?

A black and white comic panel showing a close-up of the two men. The bald man with glasses is on the left, gesturing with his right hand towards the older man on the right. The older man is looking back at him.

BUT, GOOD LORD, WHY ARE YOU ALL TALKING
ABOUT COMING BACK WHILE WE'RE STILL FAR
FROM HAVING GONE? WITH PEOPLE LIKE YOU,
NEITHER ARMILIA NOR THE CAYLUS ARCHIPELAGO
COULD HAVE BEEN DISCOVERED.

A black and white comic panel showing a close-up of the bald man with glasses. He is looking down with a thoughtful or perhaps slightly distressed expression, his hand near his chin.

COME BACK? LET'S TRUST IN THE
PEOPLE OF THE OTHER WORLD TO FURNISH
US WITH THE MEANS!

A black and white comic panel showing the two men in a heated discussion. The older man is on the left, gesturing emphatically with his hands. The bald man is on the right, looking back at him with a serious expression.

BUT AXEL, NOTHING SAYS THAT THIS PLANET IS
INHABITED, NOR EVEN THAT IT IS HABITABLE...

I'VE ALREADY ANSWERED
THAT QUESTION.

A black and white comic panel showing a close-up of the bald man's face. He has a very intense, almost angry expression, with his mouth open as if shouting or speaking forcefully.

ENOUGH DELAYS, FRITZ! YOU'RE
TELLING ME THAT YOU'RE ABANDONING
ME, THAT YOU WON'T BE ON THE
ANTINEA EXPEDITION... IT'S NOT
IMPORTANT! I'LL LEAVE ALONE IF I
HAVE TO!



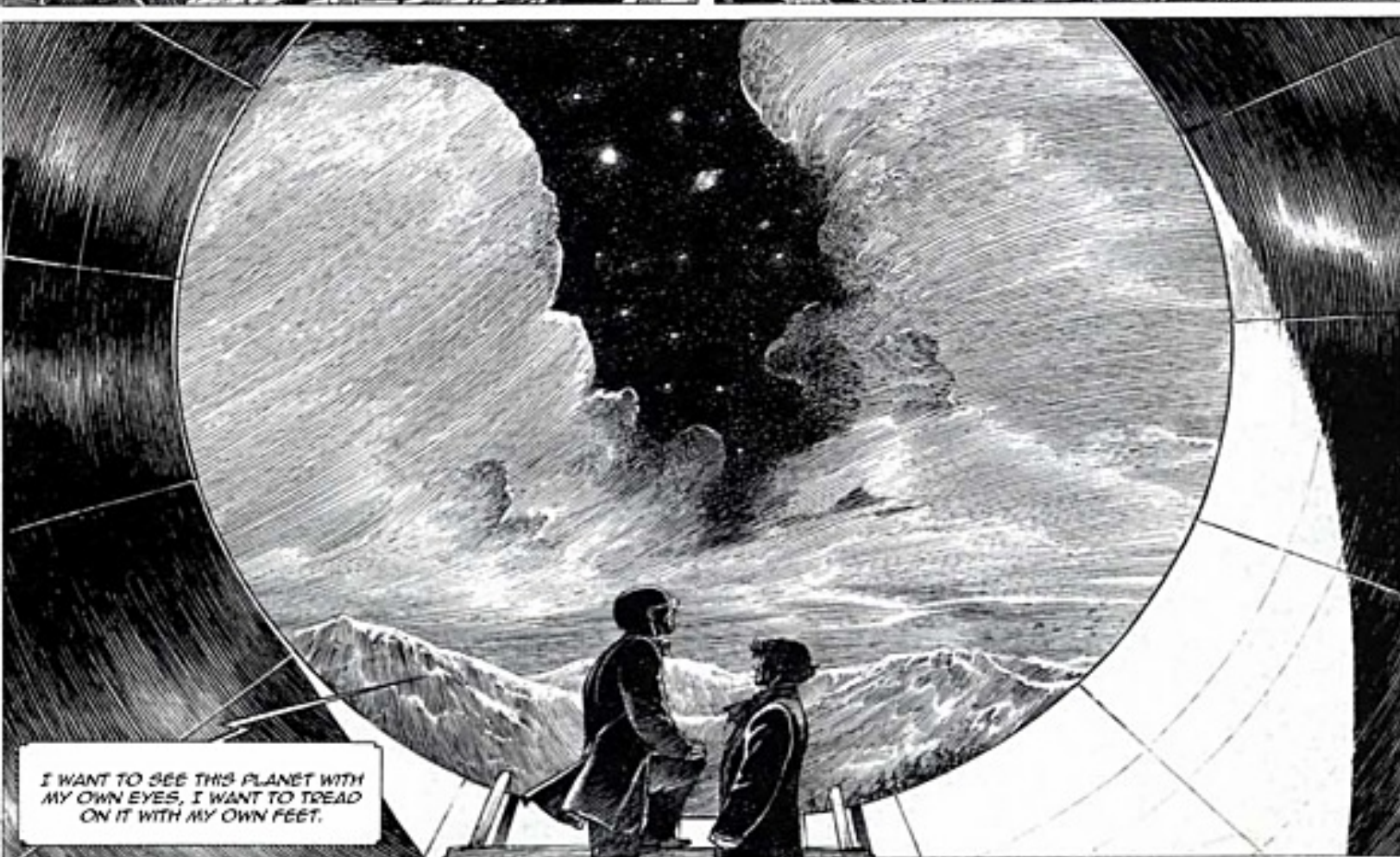
AXEL... AXEL, WE'RE NOT AT THAT POINT YET...

YES, WE ARE! IT'S TOO LATE TO GO BACK. I HAVE COMMITTED MYSELF PERSONALLY TO GENERAL MORGAN! I WON'T GO BACK ON MY WORD.



BUT THE LAUNCHING OF A FIRST ROCKET, WITHOUT AN OCCUPANT, WOULD ALLOW...

AN EMPTY SHELL WOULD TEACH US NOTHING!



I WANT TO SEE THIS PLANET WITH MY OWN EYES, I WANT TO TREAD ON IT WITH MY OWN FEET.

Porrentruy
May 2nd, 750
17:05



ROBERTSON CIRCUS
SENSATIONAL ATTRACTIONS

ROBERTSON
CIRCUS
LAETITIA THE
OFF-KILTER

IT'S NOT ACROBATICS THAT YOU'RE
GOING TO SEE NOW



BUT AN INSTRUCTIVE AND AMUSING
COURSE OF PHYSIOLOGY



OH!!

WITHOUT EVER LOSING HER SMILE,
LAETITIA FEARLESSLY ADVANCES,
ESCAPING GRAVITY TO YOUR GREAT
STUPEFACTION.

INCREDIBLE!

I THINK
THERE'S A
TRICK...



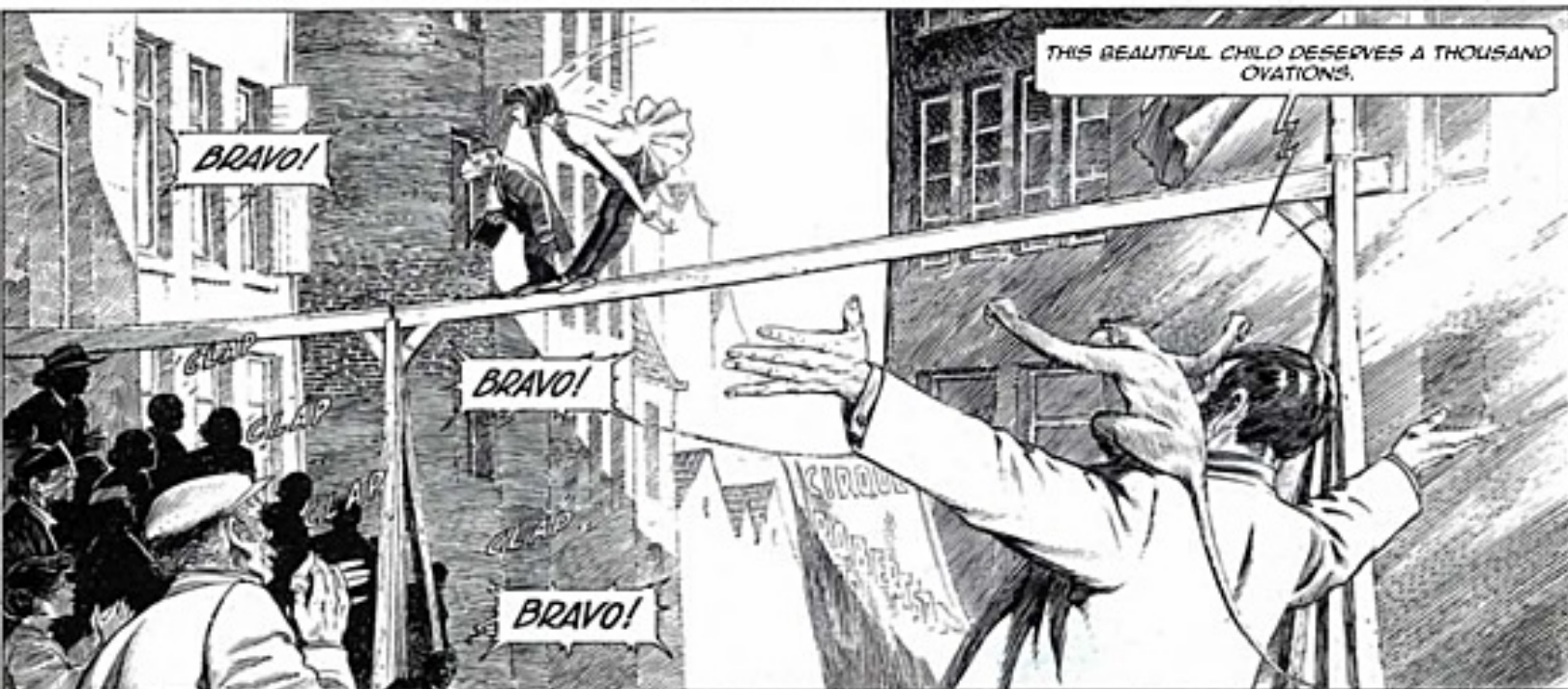
SHE'S CRAZY...



GRAB HER, SHE'S
GOING TO KILL
HERSELF!



WHAT, GENTLEMEN, IS HER MYSTERY, WHAT, LADIES, IS HER SECRET, THIS SLIGHT GIRL WHO JUMPS AND LEAPS WITHOUT A SAFETY NET?



THIS BEAUTIFUL CHILD DESERVES A THOUSAND OVATIONS.

NOW KEEP QUIET! HERE'S THE MAN WITH A TWO HEADS,
WITH TWO MOUTHS AND TWO PAIRS OF EYES. HERE ARE
TWO BRAINS IN A TEMPEST...

MISS LAETITIA...
MISS LAETITIA...

YES... WHAT IS IT?

ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF...
STANISLAS SAINCLAIR, CHIEF-EDITOR OF
THE CITIES' ECHO... YOUR ACT FASCINATED
ME. I'D LIKE TO CHAT WITH YOU A MOMENT.

OH... I DON'T HAVE MUCH TO
TELL.

EXCUSE ME FOR ASKING YOU THIS
QUESTION: HAVE YOU BEEN LIKE THAT FOR A
LONG TIME?

UHH... YES... SINCE FOREVER.

STRANGE... VERY STRANGE... I'VE HEARD TELL OF OTHER
CASES JUST LIKE YOURS, BUT MUCH MORE RECENT.

OTHER PEOPLE... LEANING LIKE ME... OH,
THAT'S MARVELOUS! DO YOU THINK I COULD
MEET THEM?

IF YOU KNEW HOW LONELY I FEEL... EVERYONE'S KIND HERE. BUT I DON'T BELONG HERE.

BELIEVE ME, I UNDERSTAND YOU... WHEN I, TOO, WAS A CHILD, I ALMOST BECAME A SIDESHOW ATTRACTION.



DO YOU THINK IT'S CURABLE?

HONESTLY, I DON'T KNOW. IN MY OPINION, ONLY ONE MAN COULD HELP YOU, BUT...



BUT...

HE'S SUCH A BIZARRE PERSON.

OH SIR, TELL ME HIS NAME PLEASE!



HIS NAME IS WAPPENDORF, AXEL WAPPENDORF... IF HE HASN'T CLOSED UP SHOP YET, HE SHOULD BE AT THE MOUNT MICHELSON OBSERVATORY, NEAR ALAXIS.

OH IT'S SO FAR... AND YET, I MUST GO SEE HIM!



GOODBYE, MR. SAINCLAIR. YOU CAN'T KNOW HOW GOOD IT HAS BEEN FOR ME TO SPEAK WITH YOU...

GOODBYE, LAETITIA. GOOD LUCK!





WONDERFUL! WHAT A SUCCESS! OUR BEST TAKE IN THREE MONTHS!

ROBERTSON, WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN HERE? I'M FED UP WITH EVERYONE COMING INTO MY TRAILER.



WELL MARY, WHO WAS IT THAT BUILT YOUR LEANING TRAILER?... IT'S NOT LIKE ANYWHERE ELSE EITHER, YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE TO PUT YOURSELF.



THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I WAS SAYING, THIS IS MY SPACE HERE!

OKAY, I GET IT! WHAT A TEMPER!



DON'T FRET, ROBERTSON, I WON'T BE BOTHERING YOU MUCH LONGER. I HAVE NO DESIRE TO GATHER MOSS HERE.



BUT WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?...

YOU UNDERSTOOD PERFECTLY!

YOU CAN'T ABANDON ME, MARY... THE CIRCUS DEPENDS ON YOU. IT'S YOU THAT PEOPLE WANT TO SEE.



THEY'RE ARGUING?

NO, THEY'RE JUST PRETENDING.

SOON PEOPLE WILL COME FROM ALL OVER THE CONTINENT TO ADMIRE YOU. WE COULD BUILD A REAL BISTOP CIRCUS TENT.

I DON'T CARE.



REMEMBER WHEN I FOUND YOU? YOU WEREN'T GOING FAR IN SODROVNI... SINCE THEN, WE'VE COVERED A LOT OF GROUND TOGETHER.

ALL RIGHT, IT'S TRUE! BUT I NEVER PROMISED TO STAY HERE MY WHOLE LIFE PLAYING A STRANGE CREATURE...



OH RAOU, HOW I'M GOING TO MISS YOU!



WHAT AN INGRATE!

WHAT? SHE'S REALLY GOING TO LEAVE?

SHE'S RIGHT. I'M GOING TO LEAVE ONE DAY, TOO.

OH YOU, IF ONLY IT WERE TRUE...



WELL, LET'S GO. WE'VE WAITED AROUND HERE LONG ENOUGH.



The High Plateaus
of Aubrac
November 26th, 1898





The cold is becoming increasingly sharp. And the preparation of the walls will take longer than I had imagined. It's not important. Nothing matters when compared to the grandiose work that I'm undertaking.



Around here, I know they think I'm mad. As derisory as the price for which they sold me the estate might be, everyone seems to find it excessive.





It's strange how I see the work appearing to me. For the first time I have the impression that it's not me designing, but that the forms are tracing themselves all alone under my fingertips.



Mylos
August 17th, 750
18:20



BUT IT CAN'T BE... IT'S HER!

WHAT'S WRONG WITH
HIM NOW?

NOW YOU'LL HAVE TO BELIEVE ME!



FOR ONCE I WAS WINNING!...
YOU'D THINK YOU DID IT ON
PURPOSE.



IT'S MARY, BEYOND THE SHADOW OF A
DOUBT!

WATCH OUT FOR THE CARDS!

THE OTHER ECHO - LAETITIA THE COFF-KILTER - A SENSATIONAL ATTRACTION AT THE ROBERTSON CIRCUS

MARY WOULDN'T MAKE AN EXHIBITION
OF HERSELF LIKE THAT!

THAT'S YOUR
SISTER?

IT LOOKS A BIT LIKE HER...

LAETITIA... THAT'S NOT THE NAME YOU
TOLD ME.

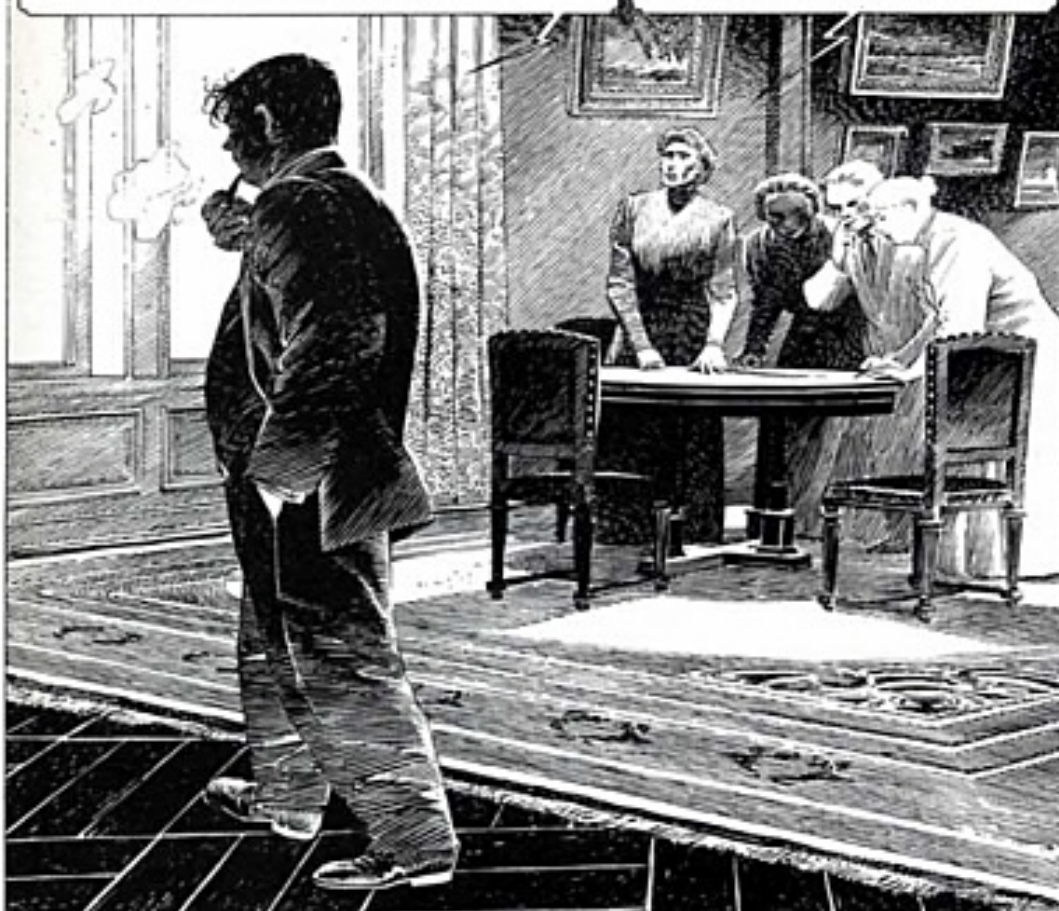


IT'S HER, IT'S THE VERY PROOF. SHE'S ALIVE, VERY MUCH ALIVE. I
WAS THE ONLY ONE TO STILL THINK SO... MY LITTLE MARY... HOW DID
SHE COME TO THIS?



THERE'S NO TIME TO WASTE NOW. I'M LEAVING
IMMEDIATELY TO LOOK FOR HER.

THAT'S COMPLETELY STUPID... YOU
COULD SEND SOMEONE.



DON'T CARRY ON, MY DECISION IS
IRREVOCABLE!

AND THE CONSORTIUM, WHO IS
GOING TO TAKE CARE OF IT?



KURT WILL REPLACE ME. IT WILL DO HIM A
LOT OF GOOD.

KURT, YOU ARE GOING TO HAVE TO FACE
A DIFFICULT TEST, BUT EXTREMELY
EDUCATIONAL. I'M SURE THAT YOU'RE
CAPABLE OF IT.



YES, FATHER, YOU CAN
COUNT ON ME.

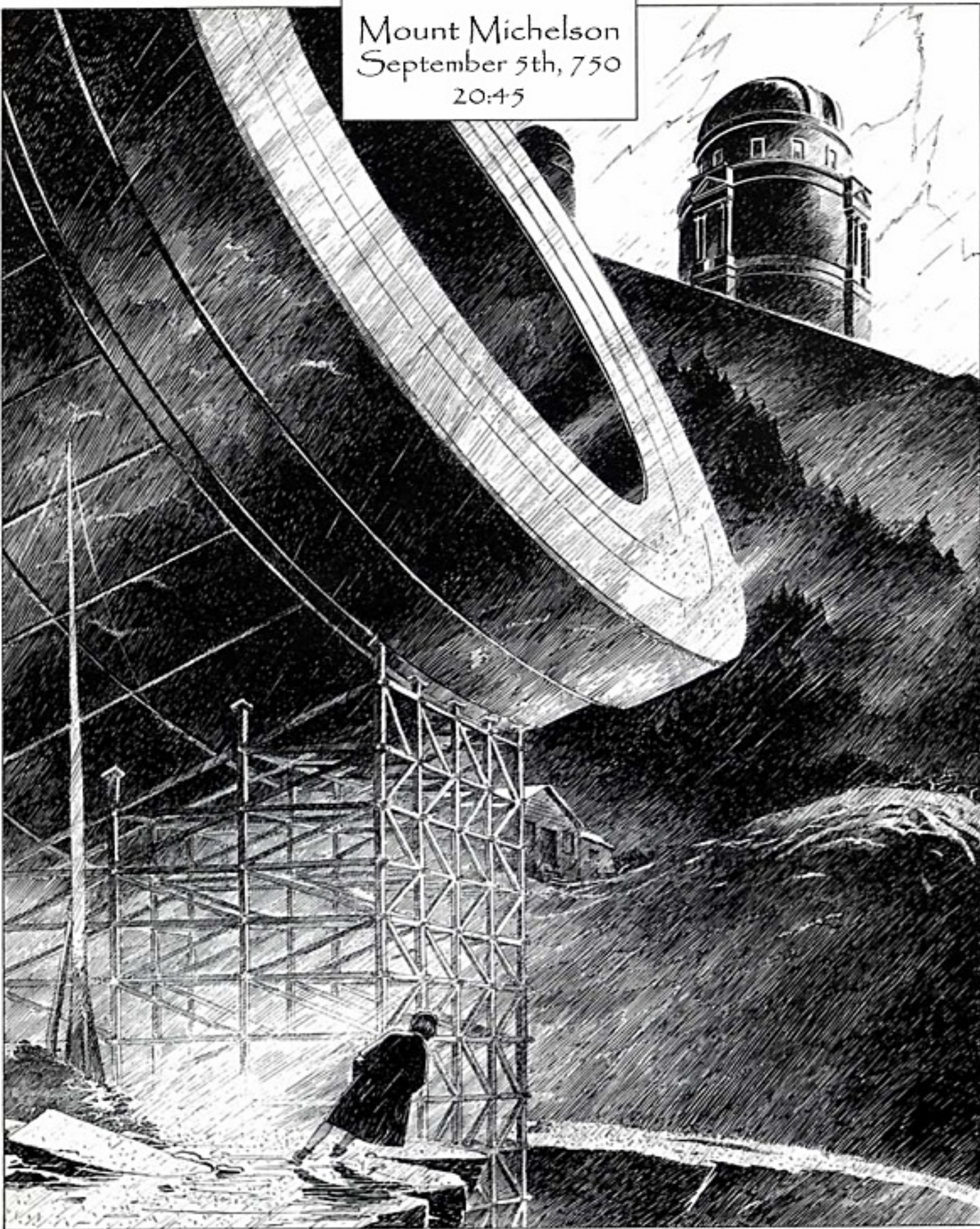


AS LONG AS YOU'RE THERE, TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE
OPPORTUNITY TO CHOOSE BETWEEN THOSE TWO CHARMING
PEOPLE!



YES, FATHER.

Mount Michelson
September 5th, 750
20:45





I'M LOOKING FOR MR. WAPPENDORF... IS HE HERE?

A YOUNG LADY FOR MR. WAPPENDORF...

ARE YOU EXPECTING
SOMEONE, AXEL?

A YOUNG LADY, YOU SLY DOG!

BUT I ASSURE YOU THAT...



GOOD EVENING, SIR... MY NAME IS MARY... MR. SAINCLAIR TOLD ME THAT YOU WERE THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD HELP ME.

ME?... I'M VERY FLATTERED, BUT I DON'T SEE HOW...



LOOK AT ME! PEOPLE CLAIM THAT I'M ABNORMAL...



YOU SEE, I'M LEANING...



...AND ALWAYS IN THE SAME DIRECTION...



IT'S BEEN GOING ON FOR THREE YEARS.

EXTRAORDINARY... A QUITE REMARKABLE PHENOMENON.



I THINK IT'S A VULGAR TRICK.



STAND IN THE LIGHT THERE, ON THE TABLE!
WE'RE GOING TO CONDUCT SOME
EXPERIMENTS...



IT'D BE BETTER IF SHE UNRESSED...



I MUST HAVE BEEN MISTAKEN
ABOUT THE ADDRESS.



NOT AT ALL!... PLEASE EXCUSE MY COLLEAGUE,
HE KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT THESE THINGS!



THESE CLOTHES, SOEREN, GIVE US A
PRECIOUS INDICATION...



LOOK! THEY ARE NOT GOVERNED BY THE SAME
INCLINATION AS HER BODY.



HER HAIR, ON THE
OTHER HAND...



...IMMEDIATELY GOES BACK INTO ITS LEANING
POSITION.



FOR ME, THE CONCLUSION IS IMPOSING ITSELF IN RATHER
OBVIOUS MANNER...

A TRICK... PERSONALLY, I
ONLY SEE THAT...



HER LESS SEEM NORMAL, HOWEVER.

I STILL THINK WE'D SEE MORE
CLEARLY WITHOUT ALL THOSE
CLOTHES.



THAT'S ENOUGH! I'M NOT A CIRCUS
ANIMAL.



YOU'RE ENTIRELY CORRECT, YOUNG
LADY... ALLOW ME ONE LAST
EXPERIMENT!... GENTLEMEN, I NEED
YOUR HELP.

THERE... PUSH HER! AGAIN!... FRITZ, HOLD HER GOOD!



RELAX, YOUNG LADY, DON'T RESIST!

BUT I'M GOING TO FALL...

THERE WE GO!



EVERYONE LET GO.



AAAHH!

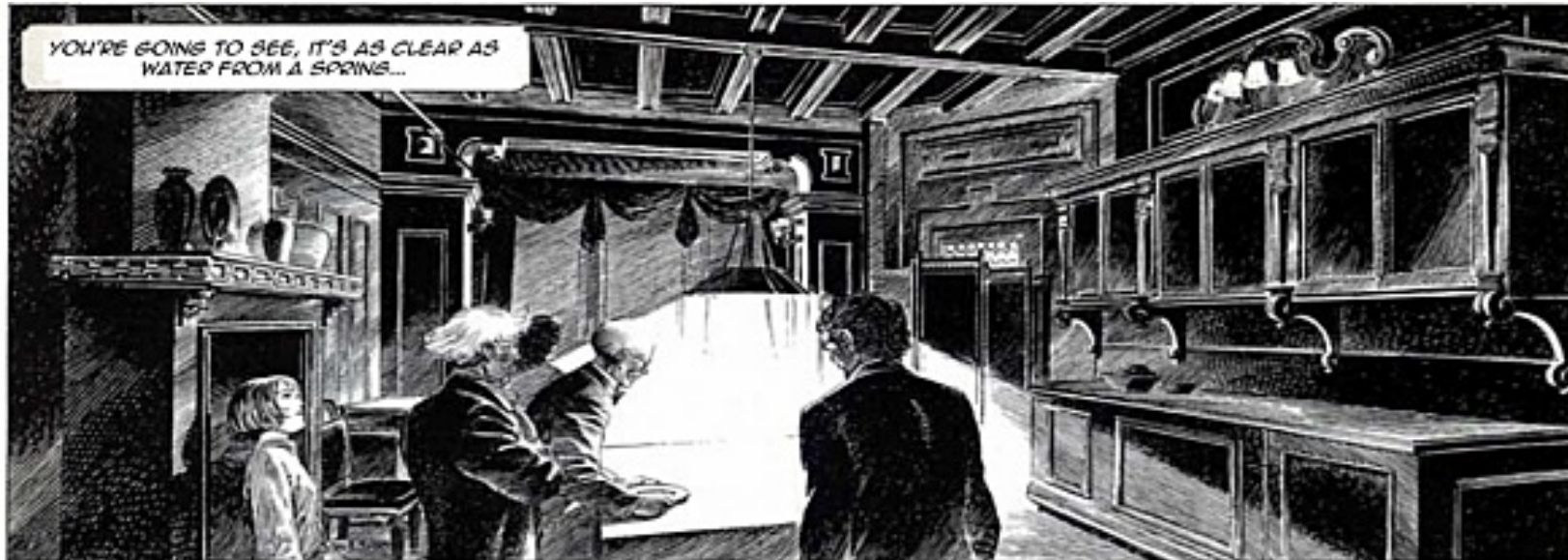


THAT'S MEAN! I WARNED YOU.

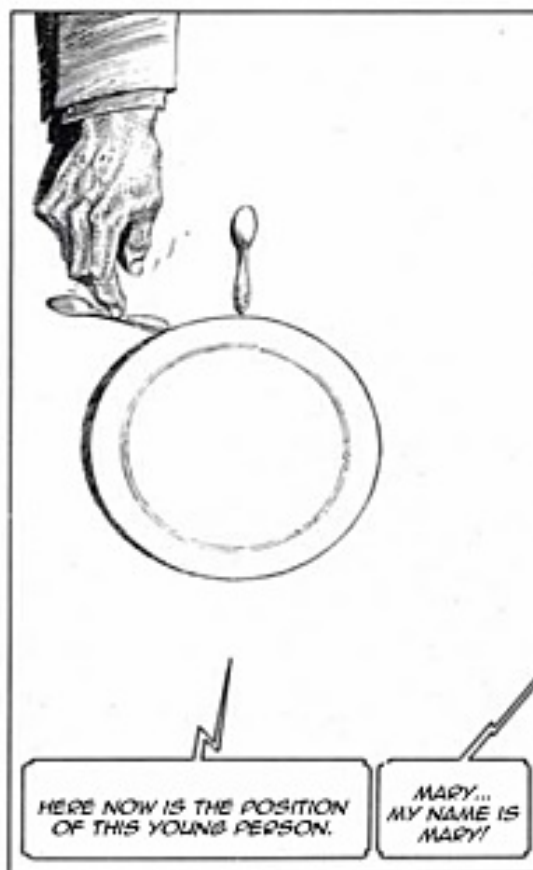
GENTLEMEN, IT'S PROVEN... THIS YOUNG PERSON IS GOING TO MAKE SCIENCE PROGRESS BY SIGANTIC BOUNDS.



YOU'RE GOING TO SEE, IT'S AS CLEAR AS
WATER FROM A SPRING...

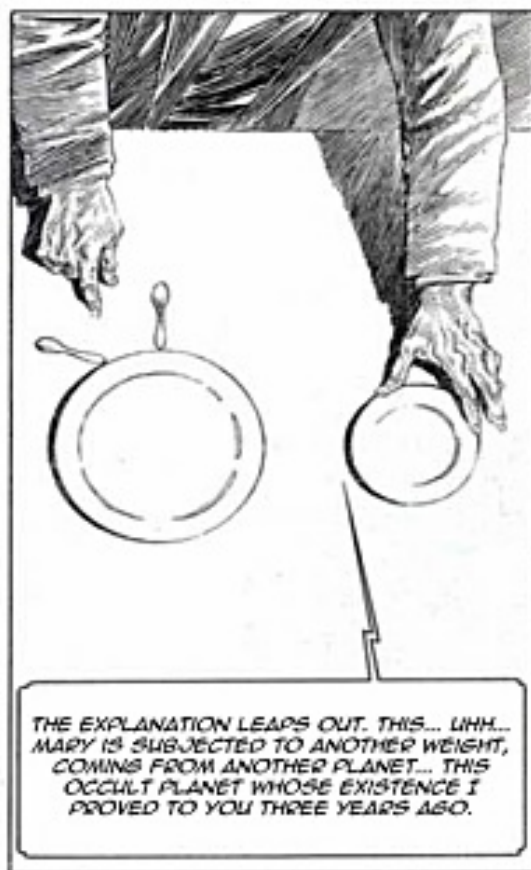


HERE IS THE POSITION OF A NORMAL
PERSON ATTRACTED BY OUR PLANET'S
CORE.

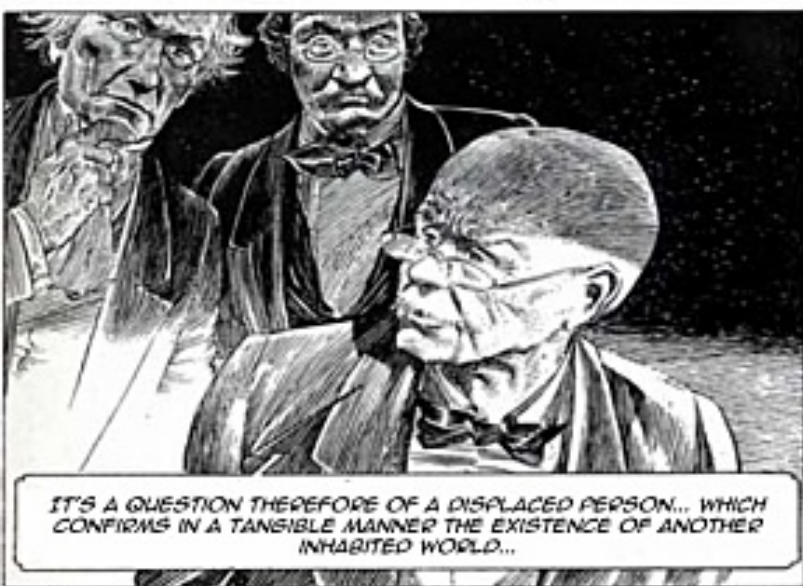


HERE NOW IS THE POSITION
OF THIS YOUNG PERSON.

MARY...
MY NAME IS
MARY!



THE EXPLANATION LEAPS OUT. THIS... UHH...
MARY IS SUBJECTED TO ANOTHER WEIGHT,
COMING FROM ANOTHER PLANET... THIS
OCCULT PLANET WHOSE EXISTENCE I
PROVED TO YOU THREE YEARS AGO.



IT'S A QUESTION THEREFORE OF A DISPLACED PERSON... WHICH
CONFIRMS IN A TANGIBLE MANNER THE EXISTENCE OF ANOTHER
INHABITED WORLD...



A WORLD TO WHICH
YOU BELONG, MARY!

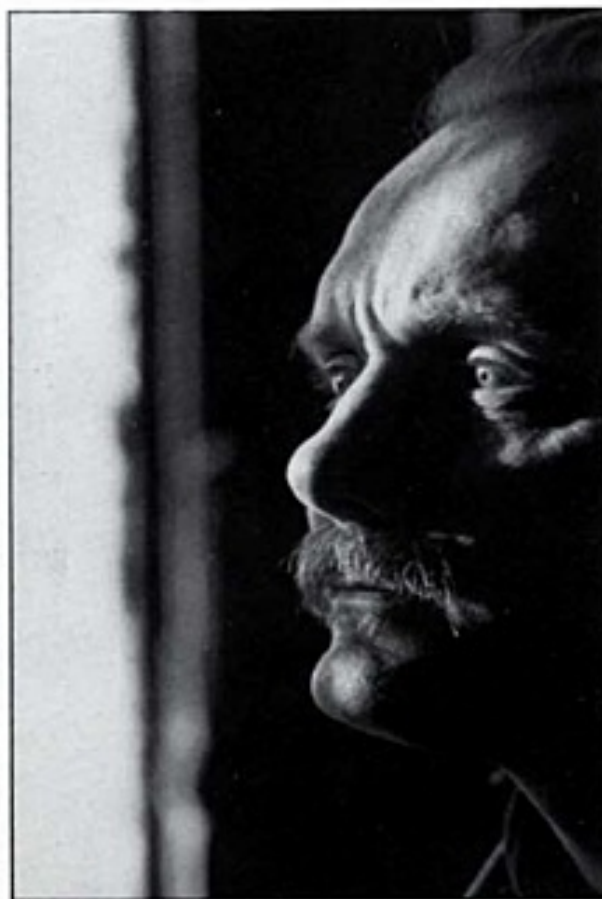
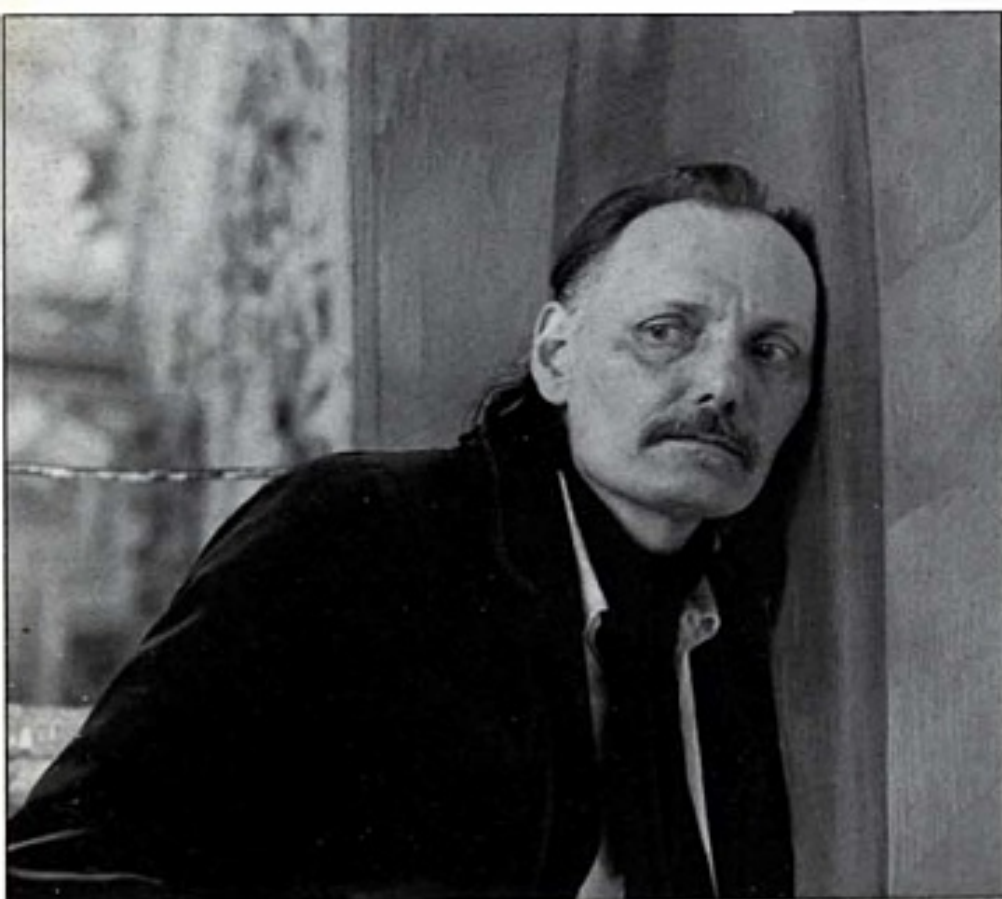
IT'S FUNNY, IT'S WHAT I'VE ALWAYS FELT...
MR. WAPPENDORF, YOU HAVE HELPED ME A
LOT. I'D LIKE TO STAY WITH YOU.

The High Plateaus
of Aubrac
October 12th, 1899





*Never would have I thought I'd paint such a fresco. It's as if the wall itself had dictated this image to me...
From here I can hear the vociferations of the critics.*



*This estate has its own secret. I've known so since the first day. When I stick my ear against the walls,
I have the impression of hearing a hum like the muted echoes of a conversation.*

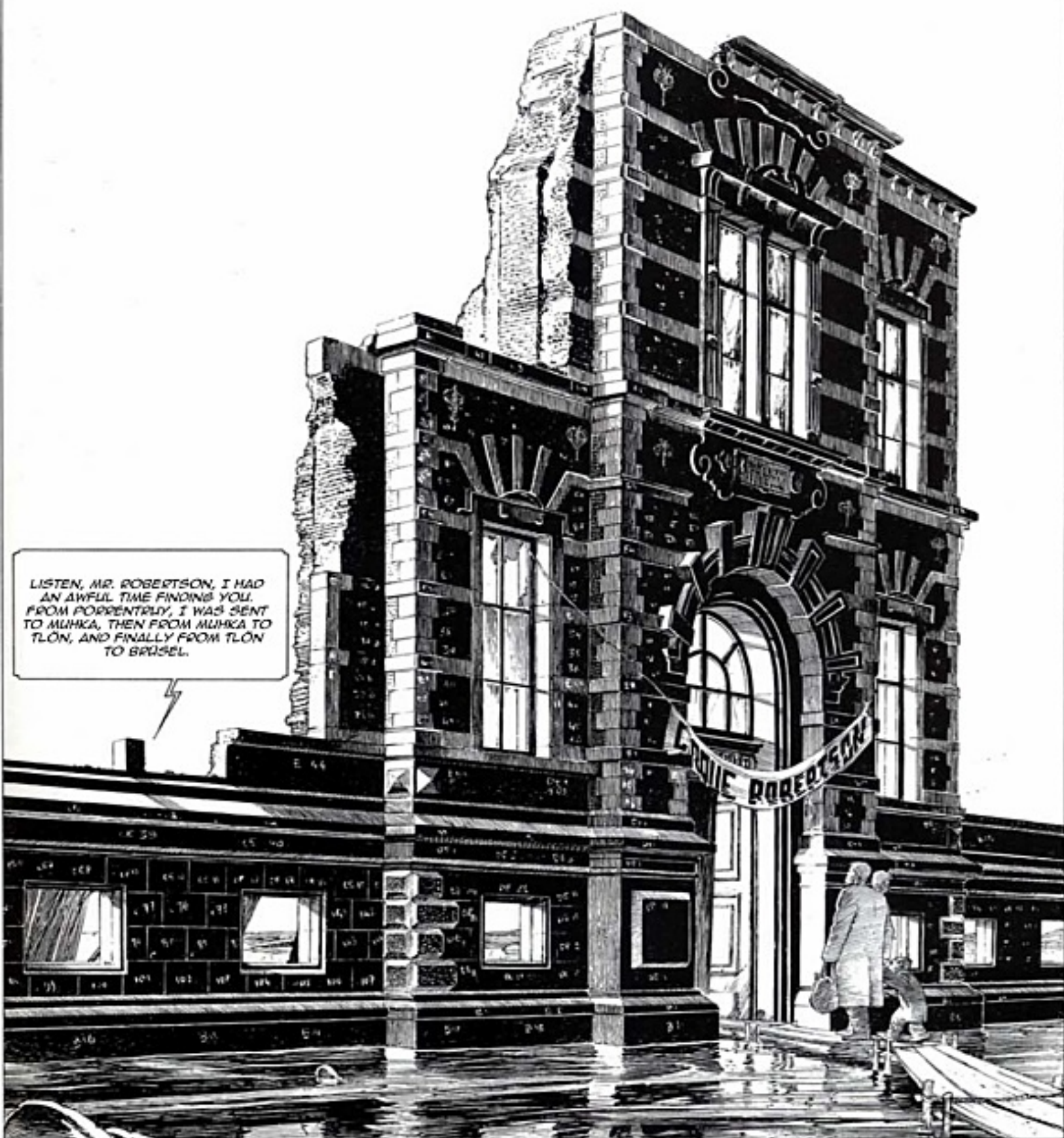


*At other times, it 's the floor which starts drowning. The noise increases, then breaks off.
I will understand even if I have to tear this house apart piece by piece.*

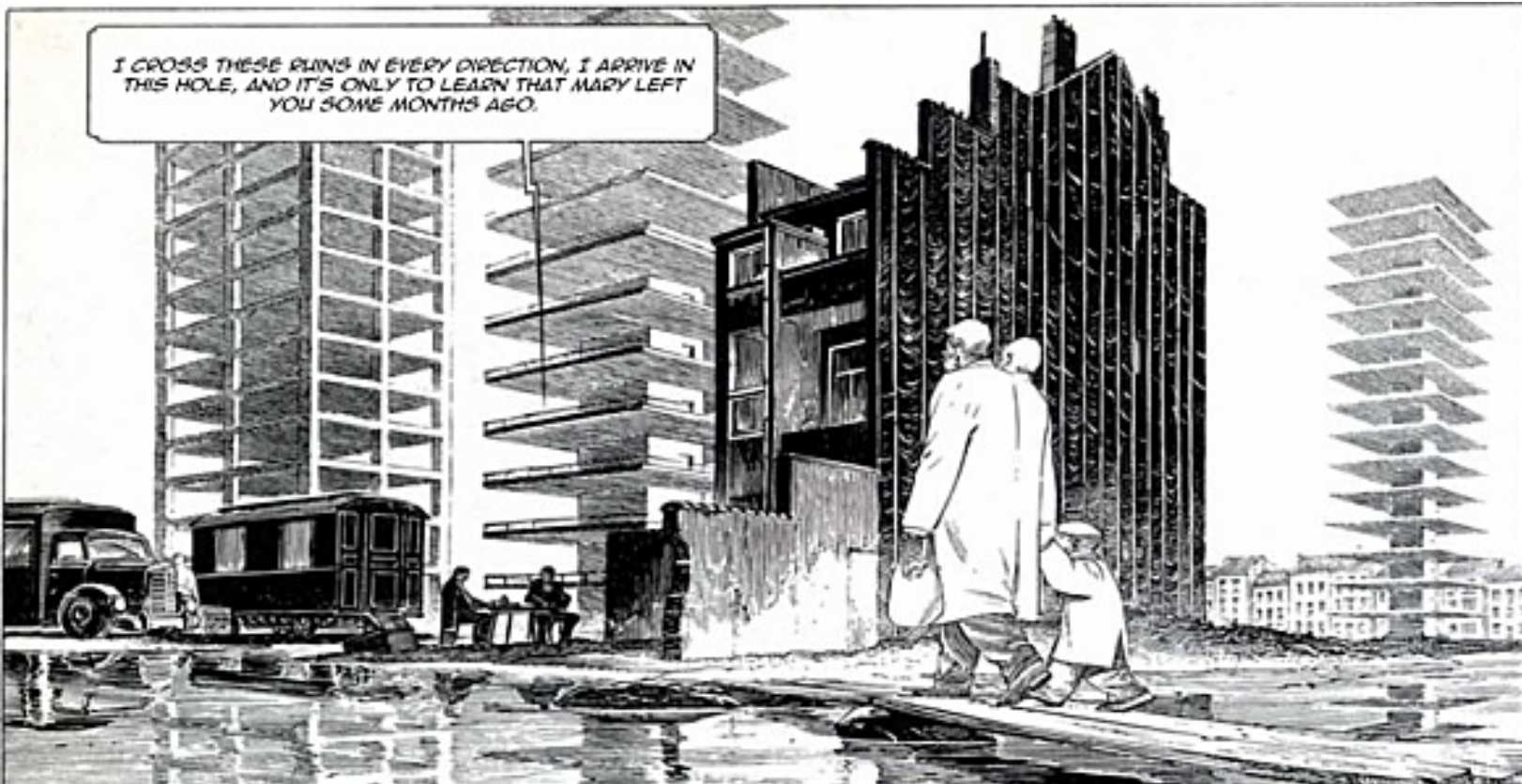


*I'm through with everything. No more letters from Florence, no more importanting visits, no more days,
no more nights. The only thing that counts from now on is the work that I must accomplish.*

LISTEN, MR. ROBERTSON, I HAD
AN AWFUL TIME FINDING YOU.
FROM PORRETRY, I WAS SENT
TO MUHKA, THEN FROM MUHKA TO
TLON, AND FINALLY FROM TLON
TO BRUSSEL.



I CROSS THESE RUINS IN EVERY DIRECTION, I ARRIVE IN THIS HOLE, AND IT'S ONLY TO LEARN THAT MARY LEFT YOU SOME MONTHS AGO.



BELIEVE ME, I'M THE FIRST TO REGRET IT, MR.... UHM...

VON RATHEN. KLAUS VON RATHEN.

SINCE LAETITIA'S DEPARTURE, THERE HAVE BEEN NO END OF PROBLEMS.



PIERRE AND DANY HAVE FALLEN INTO A PROFOUND DEPRESSION... MADAM AILEE HAS STARTED GETTING SLIMMER... I LOST MY LITTLE MONKEY... AND MOST OF ALL, THE PUBLIC HAS EVAPORATED.



WHAT A REAL PHENOMENON THAT GIRL WAS... A NATURAL... A STAGE HOUND LIKE YOU MEET ONLY A COUPLE OF TIMES IN YOUR LIFE!

SIR, YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT MY DAUGHTER?... WHY DID SHE LEAVE YOU ANYWAY?



IT'S THAT IDIOT JOURNALIST WHO
SCREWED UP EVERYTHING. IT'S BECAUSE
OF HIM THAT SHE LEFT.

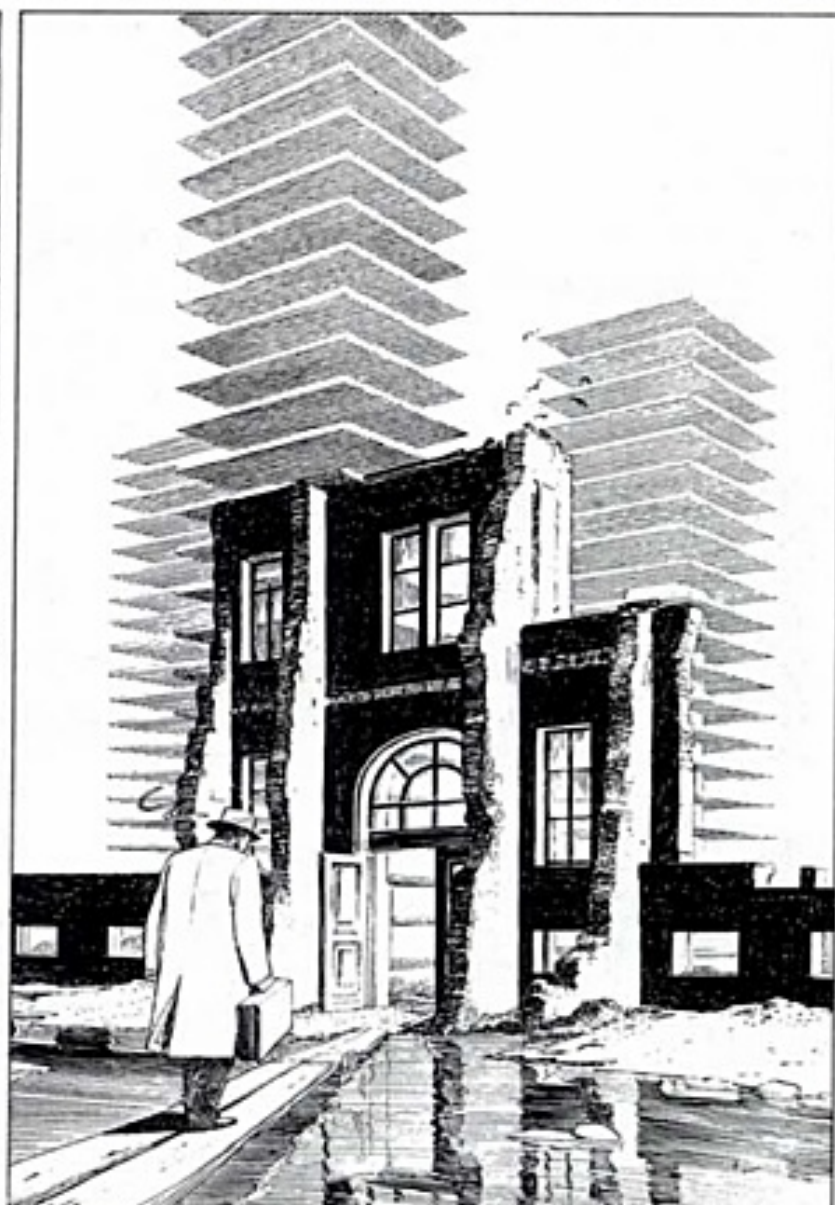
WHY? WHAT COULD HE HAVE
SAID TO HER?



HE SPOKE TO HER ABOUT A SCIENTIST... WUBELDORF OR
SOMETHING LIKE THAT... SOMEONE WHO COULD, SO THEY SAY,
RESOLVE HER PROBLEM. BUT WHAT SHE HAD WASN'T A
PROBLEM! IT WAS LUCK, A TREASURE!



OKAY... WELL, THE ONLY THING FOR
ME TO DO IS FIND THIS...
WUBELDORF... I HOPE THIS TIME WILL
BE THE LUCKY ONE! GOODBYE, SIR.



MOUNT
MICHELSON
JANUARY 24TH,



AH, THERE YOU ARE, WAPPENDORF! I'M HAPPY THAT YOU GAVE UP THAT
ABSURD IDEA OF TAKING THAT YOUNG GIRL WITH YOU...

GENERAL, THAT'S TO SAY THAT...

IT'S ALL SAID AND DONE! THE ARMY AND WOMEN HAVE NEVER
MADE GOOD BEDFELLOWS, EVERYONE KNOWS SO! BECAUSE
THIS IS A MILITARY MISSION, DON'T FORGET!

I KNOW SO VERY WELL, GENERAL AND HISTORY WILL BE GRATEFUL
TO YOU FOR IT...

CHLOWSKY HAD SPOKEN TO ME OF YOUR
OBSTINATE CHARACTER. I NOTICE WITH
PLEASURE THAT YOU CAN ACCOMMODATE
YOURSELF TO CIRCUMSTANCES WHEN THEY
REQUIRE IT.

WHERE IS THE GIRL IN FACT?

SHE MUST BE POUTING LIKE USUAL.
WHAT A TEMPER!

OH THAT! I WISH HER FUTURE HUSBAND
LOTS OF LUCK!

MR. WAPPENDORF, IT'S TIME.

GOODBYE, GENERAL SOON THIS FLAG
WILL FLY OVER THE SOIL OF ANTINEA...

HAVE A GOOD TRIP,
OLD CHAP!

BE BRAVE, WAPPENDORF! IT'S STILL ONLY A RECONNAISSANCE MISSION, BUT THE HOUR OF CONQUEST WILL ARRIVE. BE SURE OF IT! AND MOST OF ALL, DON'T FORGET THE ROCKETS TO INFORM US OF YOUR DISCOVERIES!

COUNT ON ME!

GENERAL, SIR, THIS FUSE THAT YOU'RE GOING TO LIGHT WILL SET OFF THIRTY OTHERS...

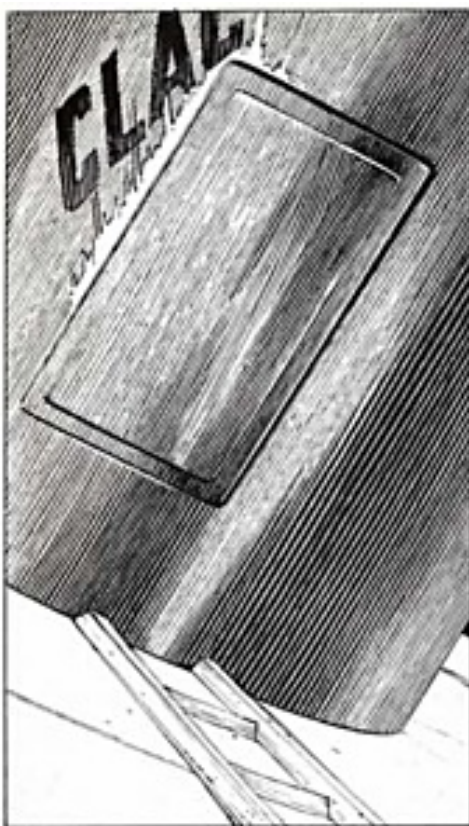
WITH THAT SINGLE GESTURE, YOU WILL THUS SET FREE 6 MILLION JEWELS OF ENERGY... A VERITABLE EARTHQUAKE.

I HAVE NEVER BEEN SO PROUD TO LIGHT THE POWDER!

DEPARTURE IN THREE MINUTES!

SAY, ARE YOU SURE THAT WE ARE RUNNING NO RISK?

NOT IN THE LEAST, GENERAL. WE ARE PROTECTED BY A QUADRUPLE LAYER OF TEMPERED GLASS.





GOOD LORD!
THAT'S WHAT I CALL A SMOKING SUN!

GENTLEMEN... GENTLEMEN...



MY DAUGHTER... MARY... WHERE IS SHE?



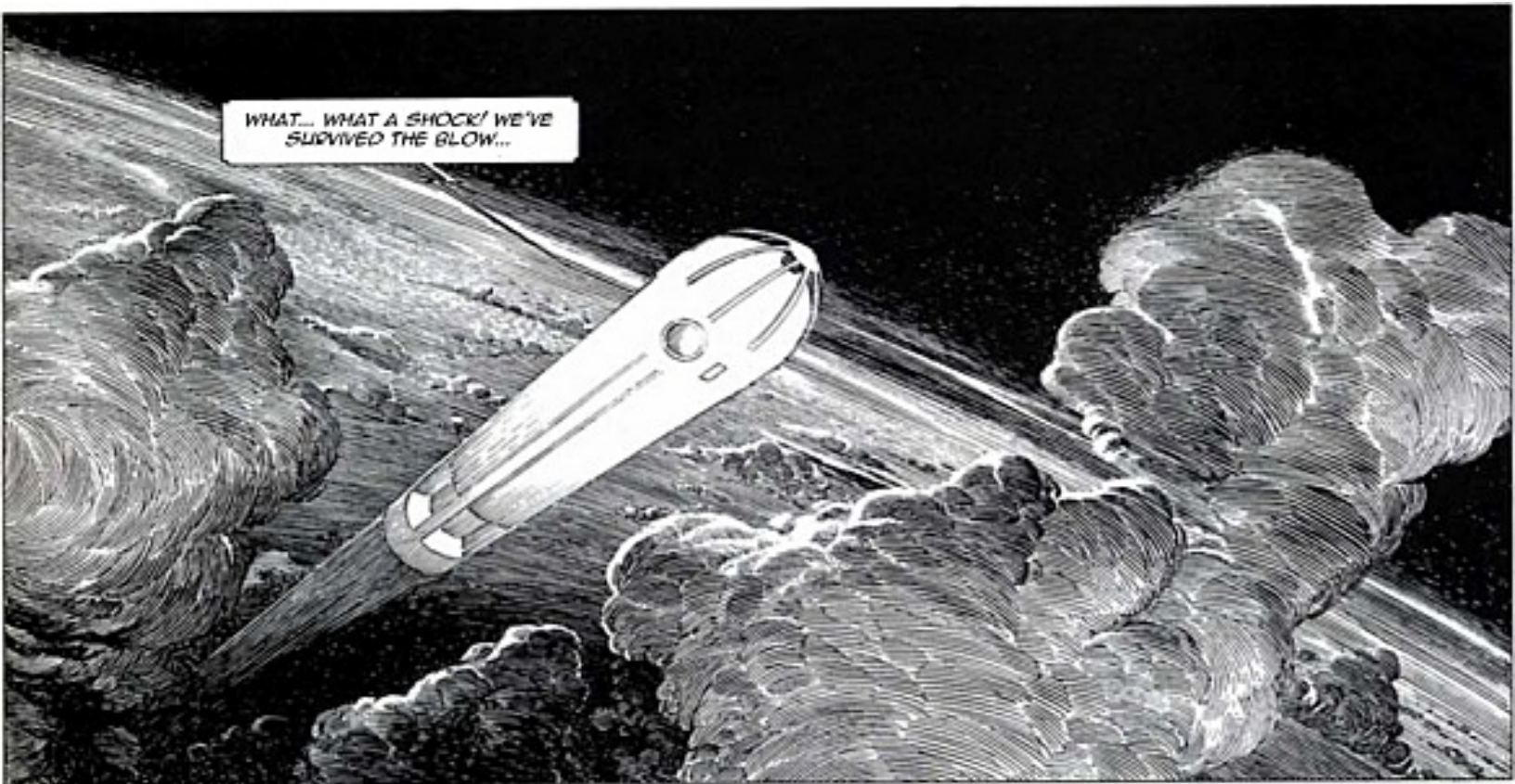
FAR AWAY!



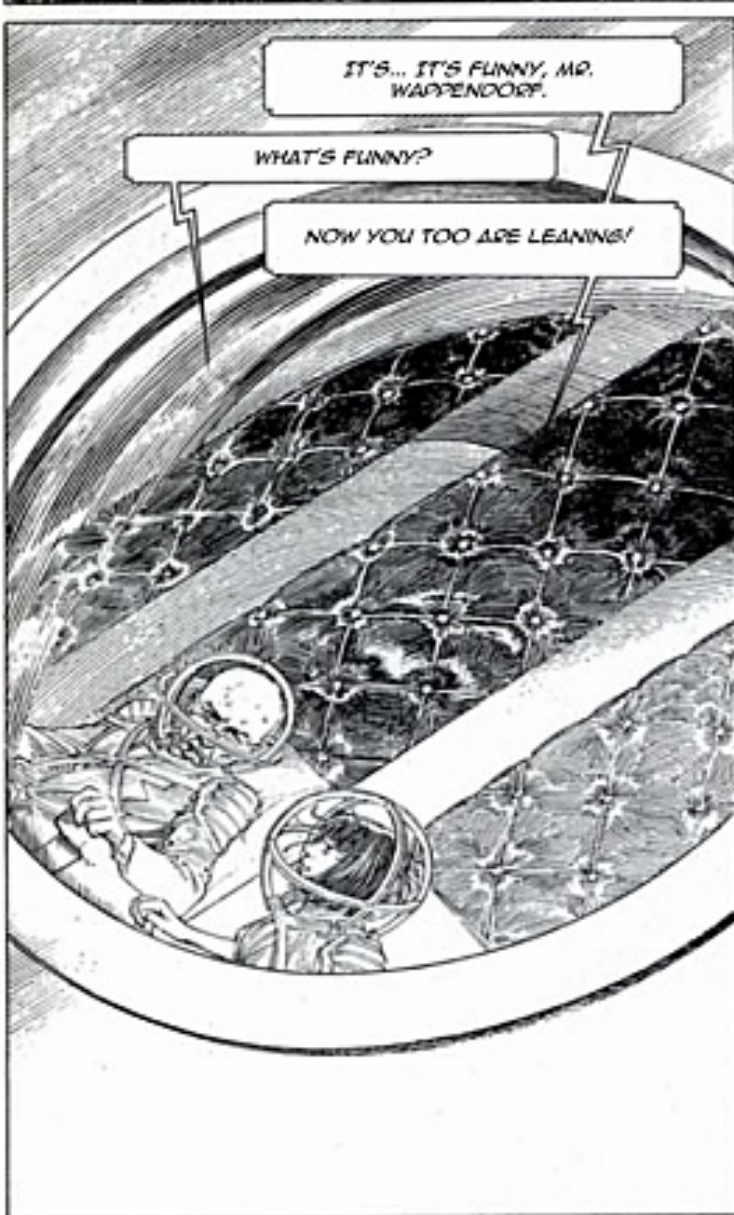
THAT'S YOUR DAUGHTER, SIR? I
WOULDN'T BE TOO PROUD OF IT, IF
I WERE YOU.



THIS TIME, THERE'S NO DOUBT! IT'S
A CARDIAC SEIZURE.



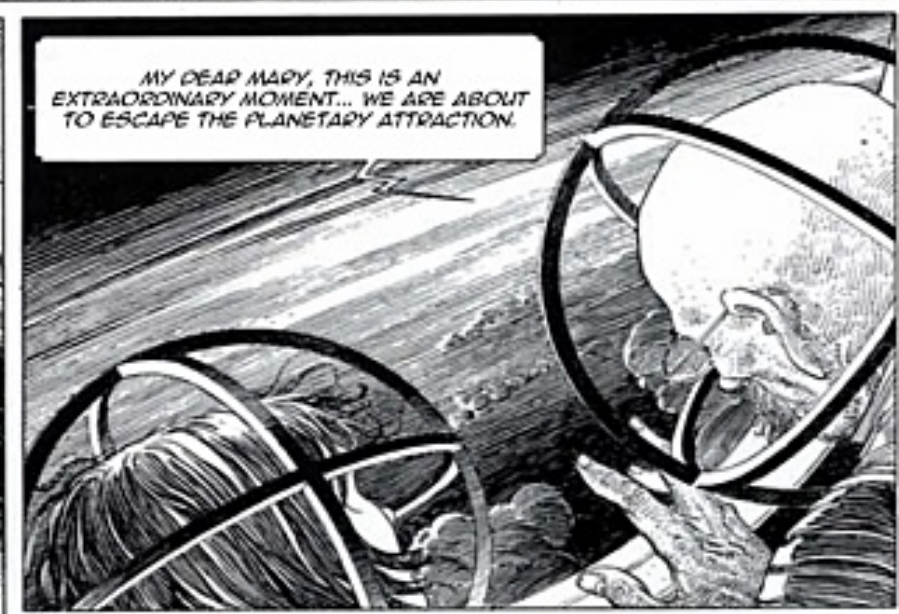
WHAT... WHAT A SHOCK! WE'VE
SURVIVED THE BLOW...



IT'S... IT'S FUNNY, MR.
WAPPENDORF.

WHAT'S FUNNY?

NOW YOU TOO ARE LEANING!



MY DEAR MARY, THIS IS AN
EXTRAORDINARY MOMENT... WE ARE ABOUT
TO ESCAPE THE PLANETARY ATTRACTION.



GREAT! THIS IS BETTER THAN AT ALAXIS.



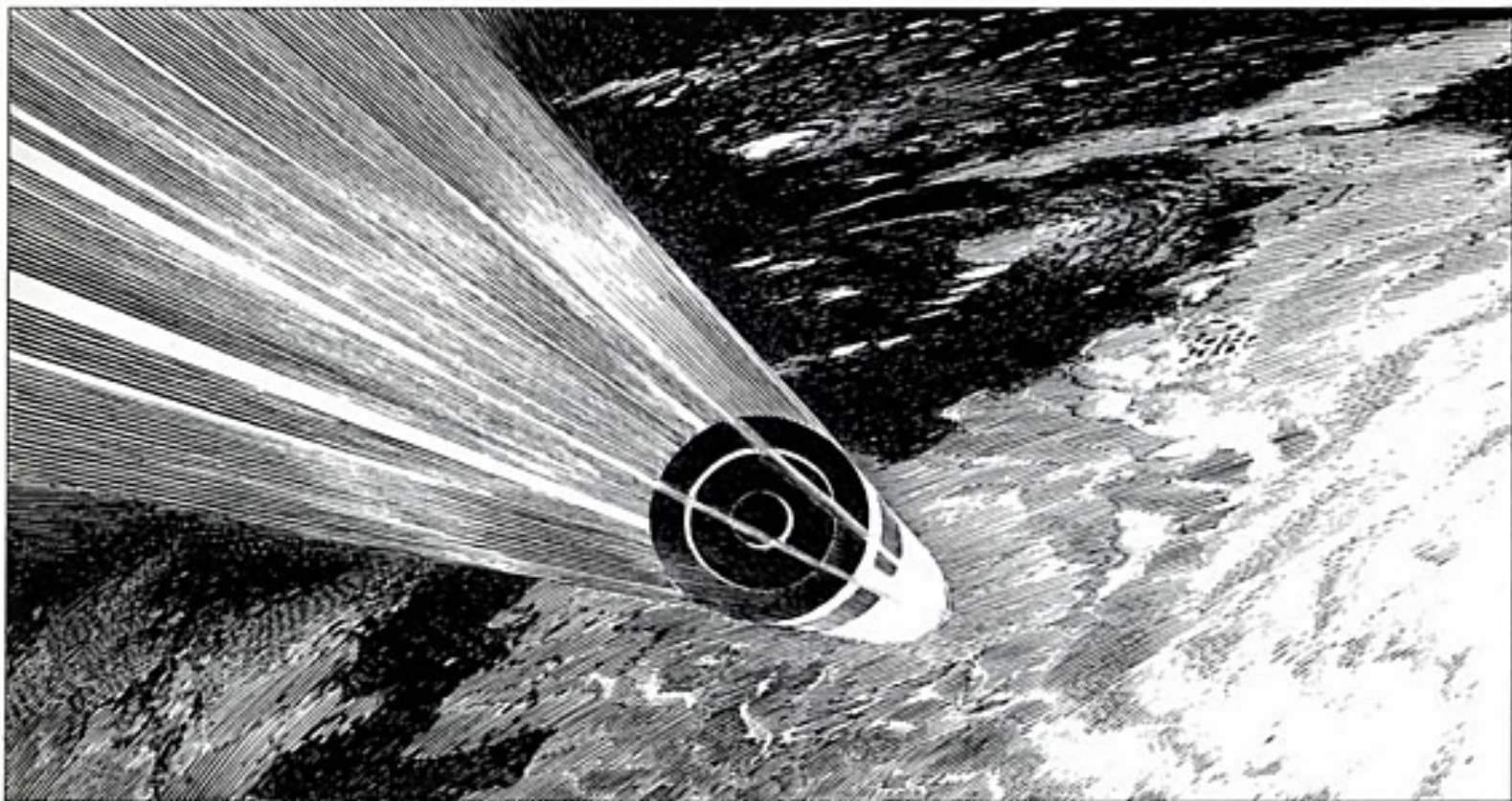
OH MY! THIS KIND OF FOOLISHNESS AT MY AGE...



ONE DAY I'M GOING TO HAVE TO START SLOWING DOWN...



WHAT'S HAPPENING?



The High Plateaus
of Aubrac
December 23rd, 1899





Once again the image of those spheres has come to haunt me; this time, I did nothing to resist. They appear to me with such precision that I'd be incapable of painting anything else.

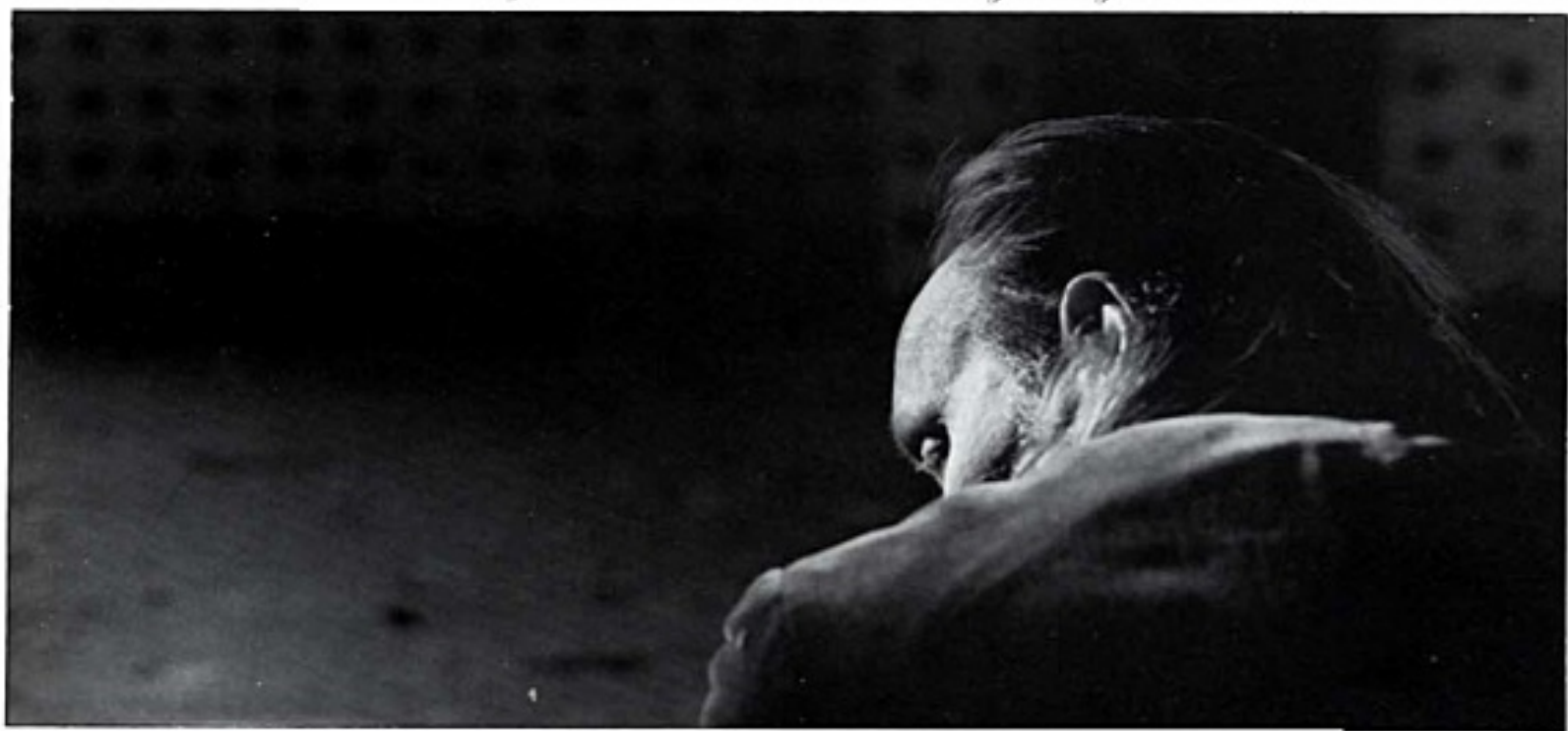


Why, in spite of myself, do my brushes keep going back to this solitary, creased sphere? The critics will be mocking me and my bizarre obsessions again. Or not rather; they will never see these frescoes. Once my task is finished, I will close the doors of this estate.



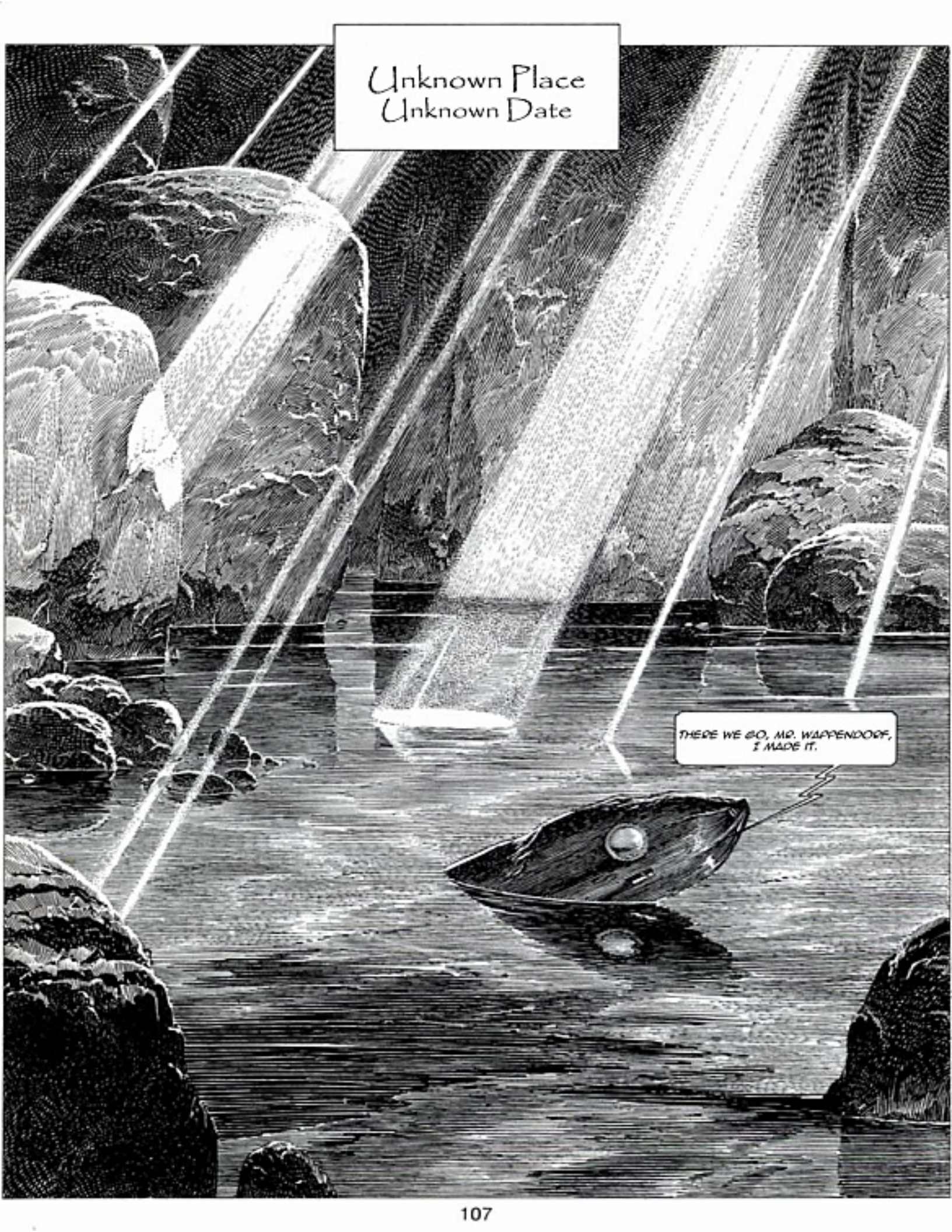


*In this great room uniquely populated with spheres, I have just now felt the imperious need for a character.
I'm sure of it now: "Phoebus' child" isn't a boy, it's a girl.*



*Whatever I do, she escapes me, I'm unable to visualize the features of her face. Never have I felt such a
need for a model.*

Unknown Place
Unknown Date



THERE WE GO, MR. WAPPENDORF,
I MADE IT.



WHERE ARE WE? IS THE
ATMOSPHERE BREATHABLE?



IT'S A LAKE... A GREAT,
SUBTERRANEAN LAKE.



DON'T TOUCH IT NOW! IT'S AN UNKNOWN
SUBSTANCE, DANGEROUS PERHAPS...

BUT THIS IS GOOD WATER, I ASSURE
YOU.



COME ON, PROFESSOR!

WHAT A DISASTER! SHE'S
LOST!



THIS MUST BE SALT WATER. WE'RE FLOATING WITHOUT THE SLIGHTEST EFFORT.



12



SPONGIAS! LIKE IN THE GREEN LAKE...



ALL THE BETTER, WE'LL HAVE SOMETHING TO EAT! COME ON, PROFESSOR, ONE MORE TRY AND YOU'LL MAKE IT!

HOW HOT IT IS! AT LEAST WE'LL BE DRY SOON.

ALL THE SAME, I REALLY WONDER UPON WHAT PLANET
WE'VE FALLEN...

ON WHAT PLANET? BUT ON OURS OF
COURSE.



ON OURS? YOU LITTLE
FOOL!

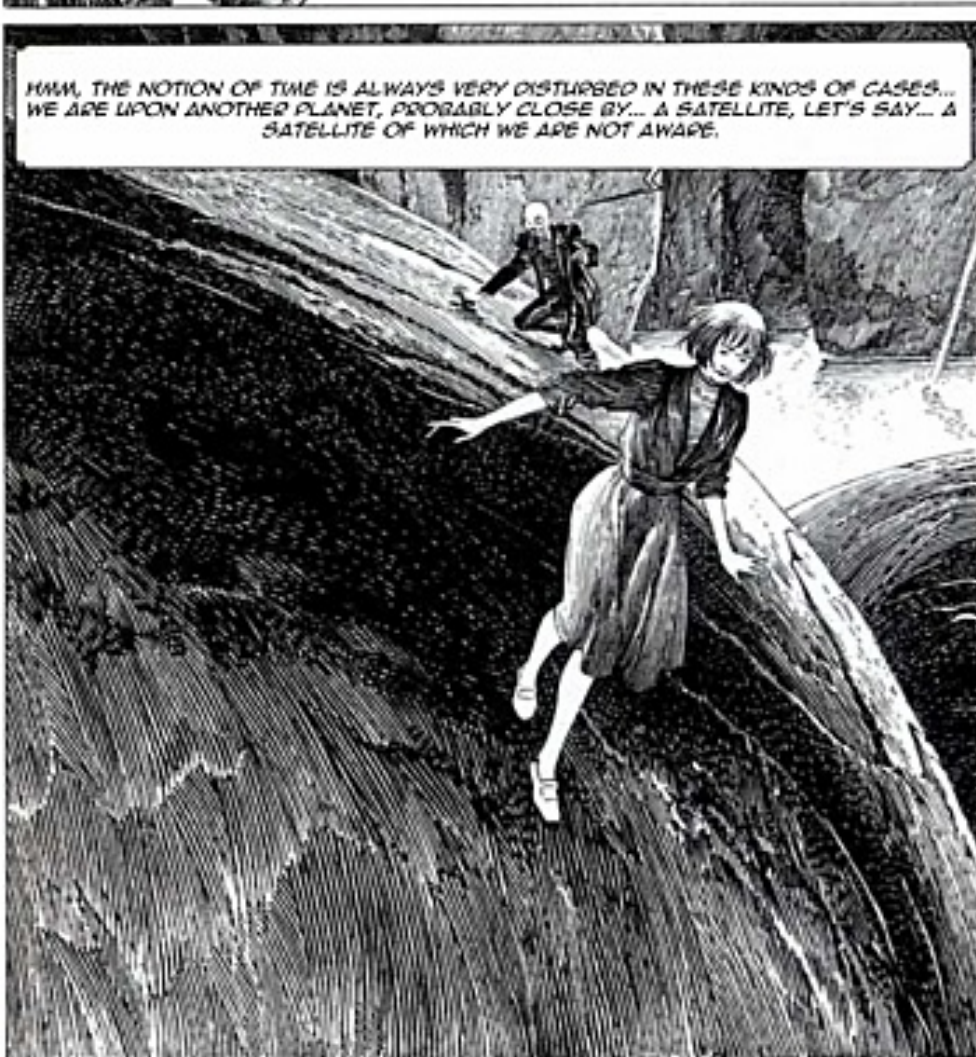
BUT LOOK, THINK ABOUT IT! THE TRIP WAS
VERY SHORT. WE FELL ALMOST IMMEDIATELY.



HMM, THE NOTION OF TIME IS ALWAYS VERY DISTURBED IN THESE KINDS OF CASES...
WE ARE UPON ANOTHER PLANET, PROBABLY CLOSE BY... A SATELLITE, LET'S SAY... A
SATELLITE OF WHICH WE ARE NOT AWARE.

BUT, PROFESSOR...

BE QUIET, MARY, YOU DON'T KNOW
ANYTHING ABOUT IT! ALSO I REALLY
WONDER WHY I'M WEARING MYSELF OUT
EXPLAINING EVERYTHING TO YOU.

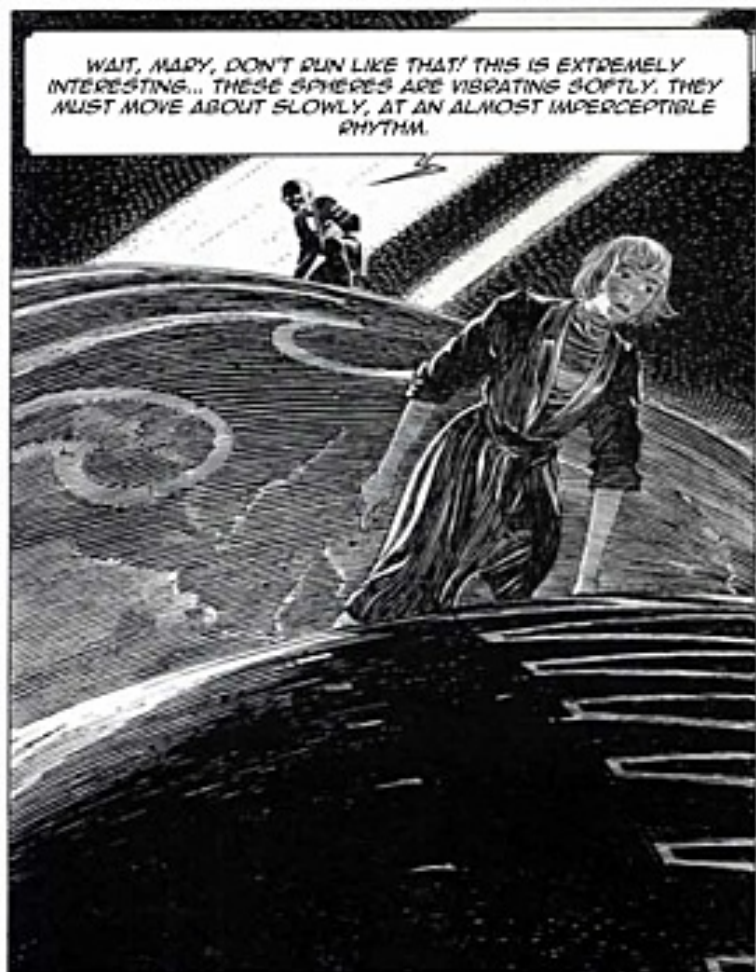




SPHERES... SPHERES AS FAR AS
THE EYE CAN SEE!



DECIDEDLY, THIS PLANET HAS MANY SURPRISES IN STORE FOR US! THIS
TIME YOU ARE NOT GOING TO TELL ME THAT WE ARE STILL ON OUR
PLANET!



WAIT, MARY, DON'T RUN LIKE THAT! THIS IS EXTREMELY
INTERESTING... THESE SPHERES ARE VIBRATING SOFTLY, THEY
MUST MOVE ABOUT SLOWLY, AT AN ALMOST IMPERCEPTIBLE
RHYTHM.



AND YOU CAN HEAR A WEAK, BUT PERFECTLY DISTINCT NOISE...
LIKE A CLOCK MECHANISM.



SEVERAL HYPOTHESES CAN BE ENVISIONED... IT COULD BE
THE INHABITANTS OF THE OTHER WORLD... IN THIS CASE,
HOW CAN WE ENTER INTO CONTACT WITH THEM? IT COULD
ALSO BE THEIR EGGS...

WAIT, MARY, DON'T RUN LIKE THAT! I'M GOING TO DO SOME CALCULATIONS TO DETERMINE OUR POSITION.

IT'S THIS WAY, I FEEL IT... I AM SURE THAT THIS IS THE RIGHT PATH... YOU'VE NOTICED, PROFESSOR, THAT I'M LEANING LESS!



WHAT A CRAZY IDEA I HAD BRINGING HER ALONG! THIS GIRL'S GOING TO KILL ME.

OVER THERE! SMOKE!



THERE'S A PASSAGE BETWEEN THOSE TWO SPHERES... SOMEONE MUST LIVE IN THIS AREA...



HELLO! IS THERE ANYONE HERE?



A SORT OF CAMPSITE. THE OCCUPANTS MUST
NOT BE FAR OFF.

PHOTOGRAPHY EQUIPMENT, TOOLS, SOME
BOOKS...



THERE'S EVEN SOMETHING TO EAT.

IT'S TOO BAD EVERYTHING'S A
MESS!



OH, THE LATEST BOUND EDITION OF
SCIENCE TOMORROW!

AN ARTICLE ON INFRA-CONDUCTORS...
THAT'S REALLY WONDERFUL!



I'M GOING TO LOOK FOR
THESE PEOPLE... THEY CAN'T
BE FAR AWAY.

IN ANY EVENT, I'M STAYING HERE, I
CAN'T GO ANY FARTHER.



The High Plains of
Aubrac
January 3rd, 1900



*I still haven't finished the portrait of the girl. Lacking her, all the other freezes seem useless to me.
Why did I start painting these doors?*



*Sometimes I have the feeling that places are changing around me.
That this hallway, even yesterday, wasn't so narrow. Has the solitude of this place ended up by making me crazy?*



I feel myself irresistibly drawn...



WHAT... WHAT'S
HAPPENING?



IT'S DARK... ALREADY!







AND YOU?

UHH... AUGUSTIN, AUGUSTIN
DESCOMBRES.

I WAS AFRAID YOU MIGHT NOT BE OLDER... FROM
YOUR HOUSE.

MY HOUSE?



YES, I KNOW IT'S NOT REALLY A HOUSE...
WELL, WE HAVE SET OURSELVES UP AT
YOUR PLACE. THERE WAS STILL A FIRE.

WHERE ARE WE? I DON'T UNDERSTAND...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED.



COME ON NOW, GET A HOLD OF
YOURSELF! WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?

I WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF PAINTING... OF
PAINTING YOU.

PAINTING ME? ME?!



YES I KNOW THAT IT'S CRAZY, BUT I RECOGNIZE YOU. I'M SURE THAT IT WAS YOU.



AND YET, I WAS COMING UP WITH NOTHING. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN YEARS, I REALLY NEEDED A MODEL... SOMEONE LIVING...



I CAN POSE FOR YOU, IF YOU LIKE... I SAW IT DONE IN SODROVNI.



SODROVNI?... BUT WHERE ARE WE, MARY, WHERE ARE WE?



ON ONE OF THE SPHERES...

A SPHERE, THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! EVERYTHING IS FLAT AND DESERTED LIKE AURAC.



YES, AUGUSTIN, IT REALLY IS A SPHERE, SEPARATED FROM THE OTHERS, THE ONLY ONE WHERE I'M NOT LEAVING... IT'S MY HOME... OUR HOME.



THE SPHERES... IT'S INCREDIBLE...

YOU'RE NO LONGER
DRAWING, AUGUSTIN?



YES, MARY, RIGHT AWAY... JUST A DETAIL OF
YOUR HAIR...



A REBELLIOUS LOCK.



AUGUSTIN?

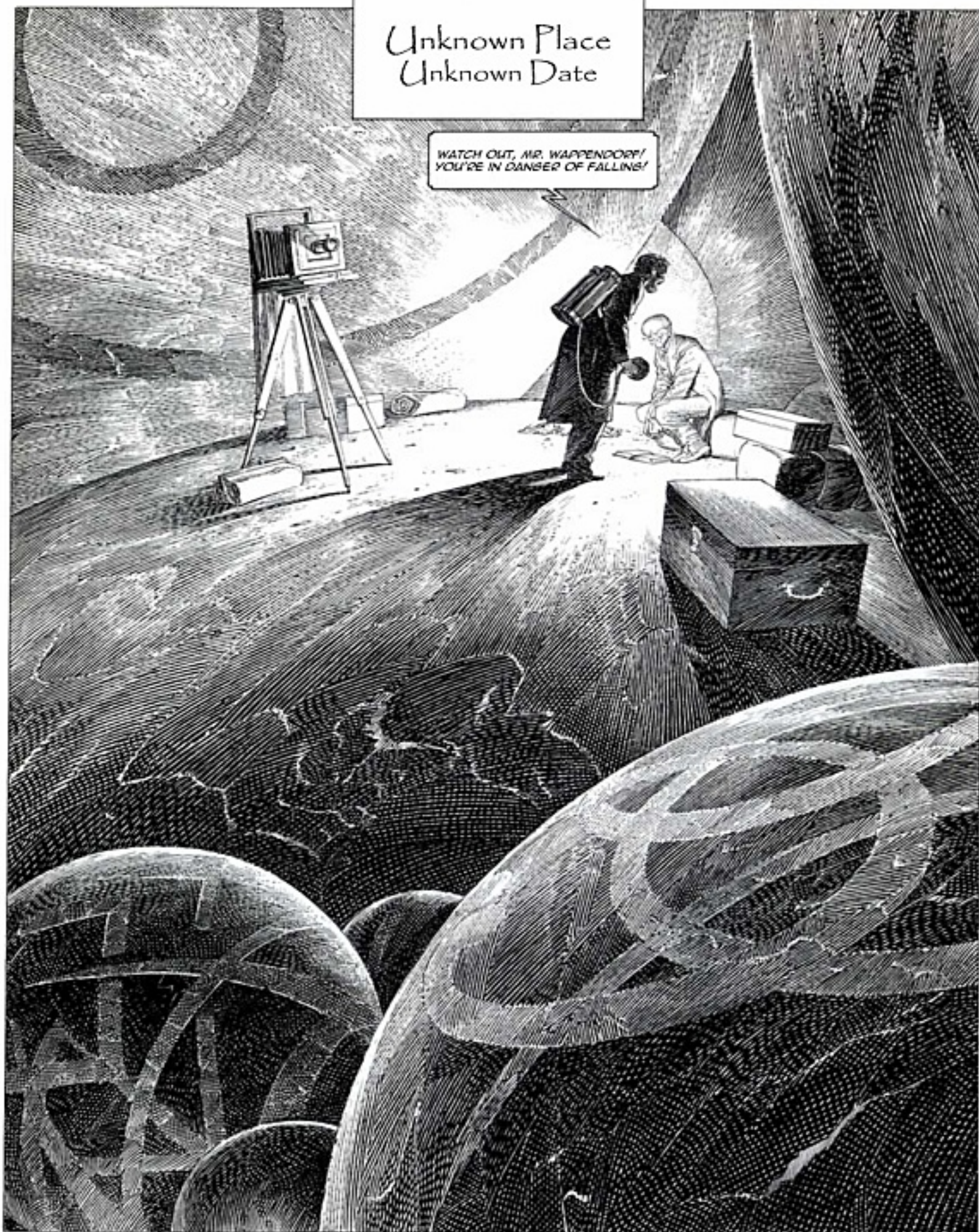
YES, MARY...





Unknown Place
Unknown Date

WATCH OUT, MR. WAPPENDORF!
YOU'RE IN DANGER OF FALLING!



MR... UHHH... WHO...

VERNE. JULES VERNE, NOVELIST. YOU DON'T KNOW ME, BUT I KNOW YOU. MICHEL ARDAN HAD ME READ YOUR "ENCYCLOPEDIA OF TRANSPORTATION."

MICHEL ARDAN, BUT...

YOU'VE ONLY JUST MISSED HIM. HE SET OUT AGAIN A FEW HOURS AGO WITH HIS COMPANION.

ACCORDING TO WHAT THEY SAID TO ME, THEY BOTH GOT LOST AT THE BOTTOM OF A CHASM DURING AN ARCHEOLOGICAL EXPEDITION. THEY STAYED HERE FOR AWHILE, BEFORE AGAIN UNDERTAKING THEIR EXPEDITION.

MARY WAS RIGHT THEN. WE REALLY HAVE FALLEN INTO THE DEPTHS OF OUR OWN WORLD.

THE PLACE IS EXTRAORDINARY. COME, I'LL SHOW YOU ALL OF IT... HERE, TAKE THIS LAMP!

BUT YOU, SIR, WHAT WORLD DO YOU COME FROM? IN WHAT VESSEL DID YOU ARRIVE HERE?

I USED NO ENGINE. AND YET, GOD KNOWS I HAVE DESCRIBED SOME MACHINES... BUT THE MOST EFFICIENT AND THE MOST TRUSTWORTHY, FOR ME IN ANY CASE, IS WRITING.

WRITING?

YES, MR. WAPPENDORF, BY SOLE FORCE OF IMAGINATION IN CERTAIN PRIVILEGED MOMENTS, I MANAGE TO ABANDON TOTALLY THE WORLD IN WHICH I LIVE...



IT HAPPENED THE FIRST TIME SOME YEARS AGO... AFTER VISITING AN EXHIBITION... THERE WAS A STRANGE PAINTING THERE THAT HELD MY ATTENTION FOR A LONG TIME, A PAINTING BY ONE DESOMBRES.



THAT EVENING, I STARTED WRITING A STORY ABOUT THIS IMAGE AND I FELL ASLEEP OVER MY PAGE... I FOUND MYSELF IN THE WORLD OF THE PAINTING...

OH MY, I'M LEARNING MORE AND MORE!



SINCE THEN, I HAVE MADE SEVERAL EXTRAORDINARY VOYAGES ON YOUR PLANET. I'VE BURIED MYSELF IN THE DEPTHS OF YOUR CHASMS, I HAVE NAVIGATED ON THE SEA OF SILENCES, TRAVERSED THE DESERT OF THE SOMONTES... AH, MR. WAPPENDORF, WHAT A WORLD YOURS IS!



YOU'RE GOING TO SEE, YOU WON'T REGRET HAVING
COME DOWN.

I CAN'T GO ON, I'M
EXHAUSTED.

DON'T WORRY! MICHEL ARDAN AND HIS COMPANION
WERE LEAVING AS MUCH AS YOU ARE.

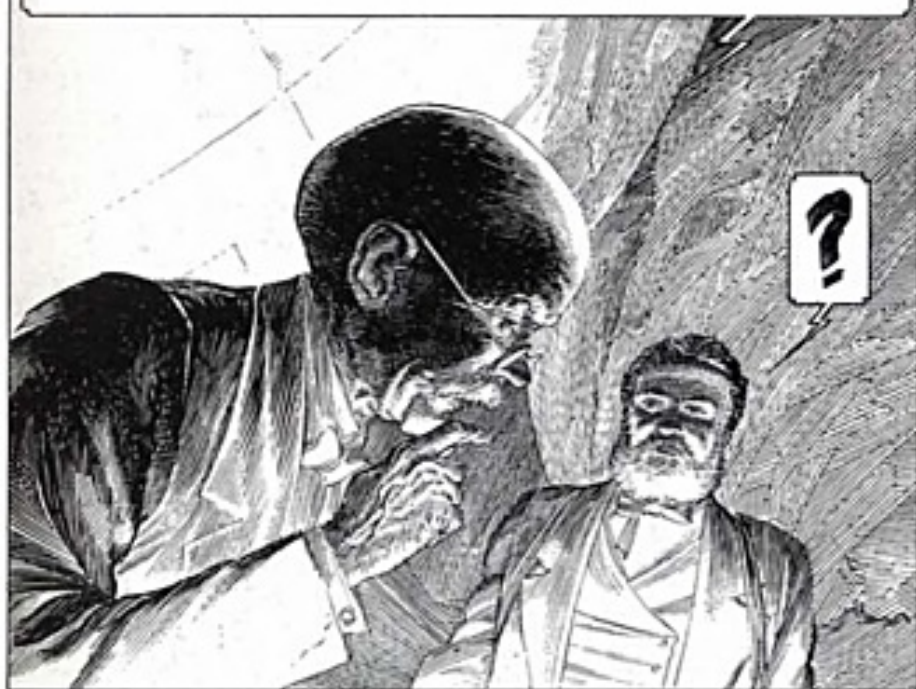
THERE, THIS IS WHERE I WANTED TO BRING YOU.

SO, WHAT DO YOU THINK?

CLEARLY, ONE OF THE SPHERES
HAS DETACHED ITSELF FROM THE
OTHERS. THE TRACES ARE STILL
QUITE VISIBLE.

ALL THESE SPHERES ARE IN SOLIDARITY... THEY ARE MUTUALLY INTERDEPENDENT... THE
ABSENCE OF A SINGLE ONE COULD DE-STABILIZE THE WHOLE SYSTEM.

YES, I'M STARTING TO SEE IT MORE CLEARLY... THERE MUST HAVE BEEN SOME INTERFERENCE PRODUCED BETWEEN THE TWO WORLDS... AND MARY'S INFIRMITY CERTAINLY IS TIED IN WITH THAT...



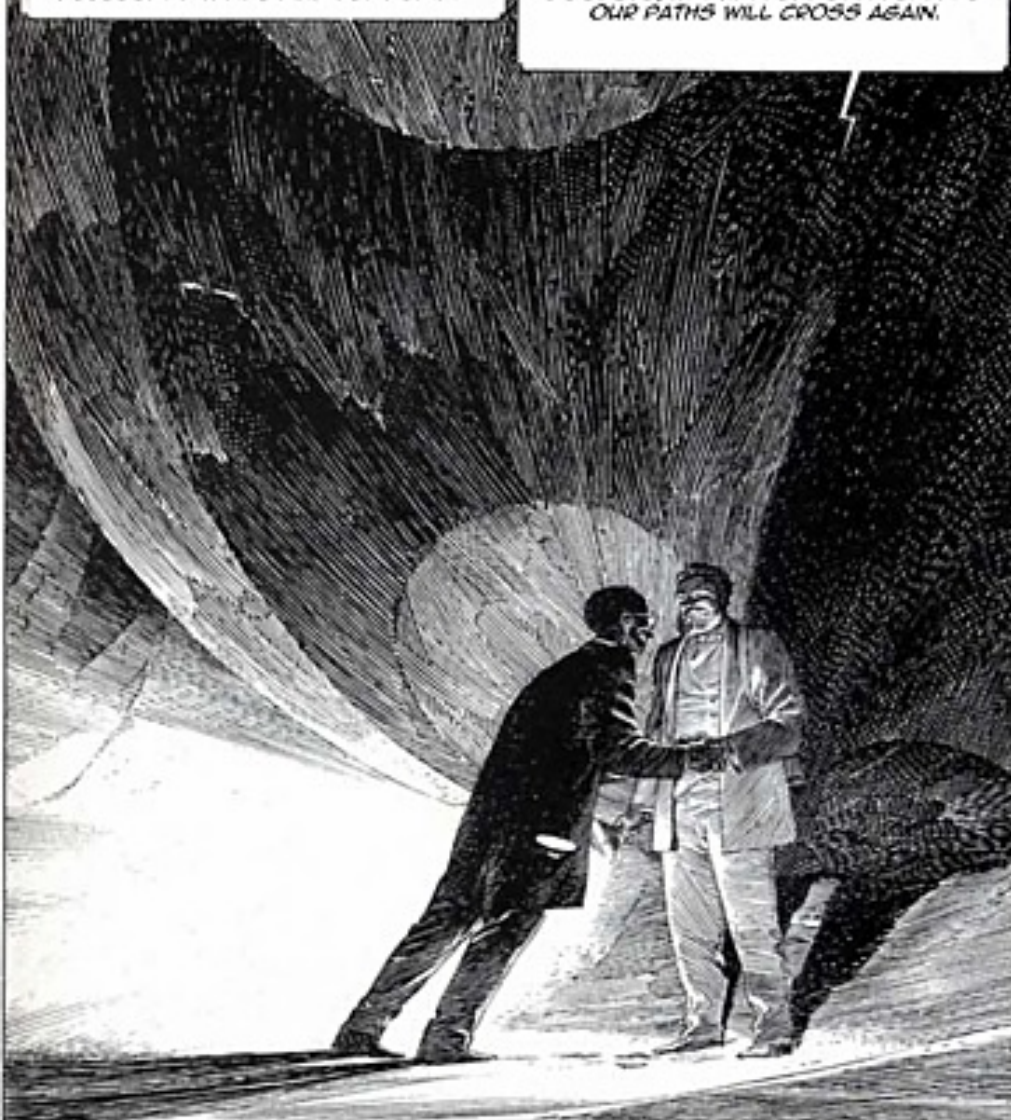
WHO'S MARY?

MARY, WELL... AH, WHERE HAS SHE GOTTEN OFF TO? THE GENERAL WAS RIGHT; I SHOULD HAVE NEVER BROUGHT HER.



PARDON ME, BUT I'M GOING TO HAVE TO LEAVE YOU. IT'S ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY THAT I FIND HER AGAIN.

YOU'RE RIGHT. WOMEN DON'T WAIT... GOODBYE, MR. WAPPENDORF. PERHAPS OUR PATHS WILL CROSS AGAIN.

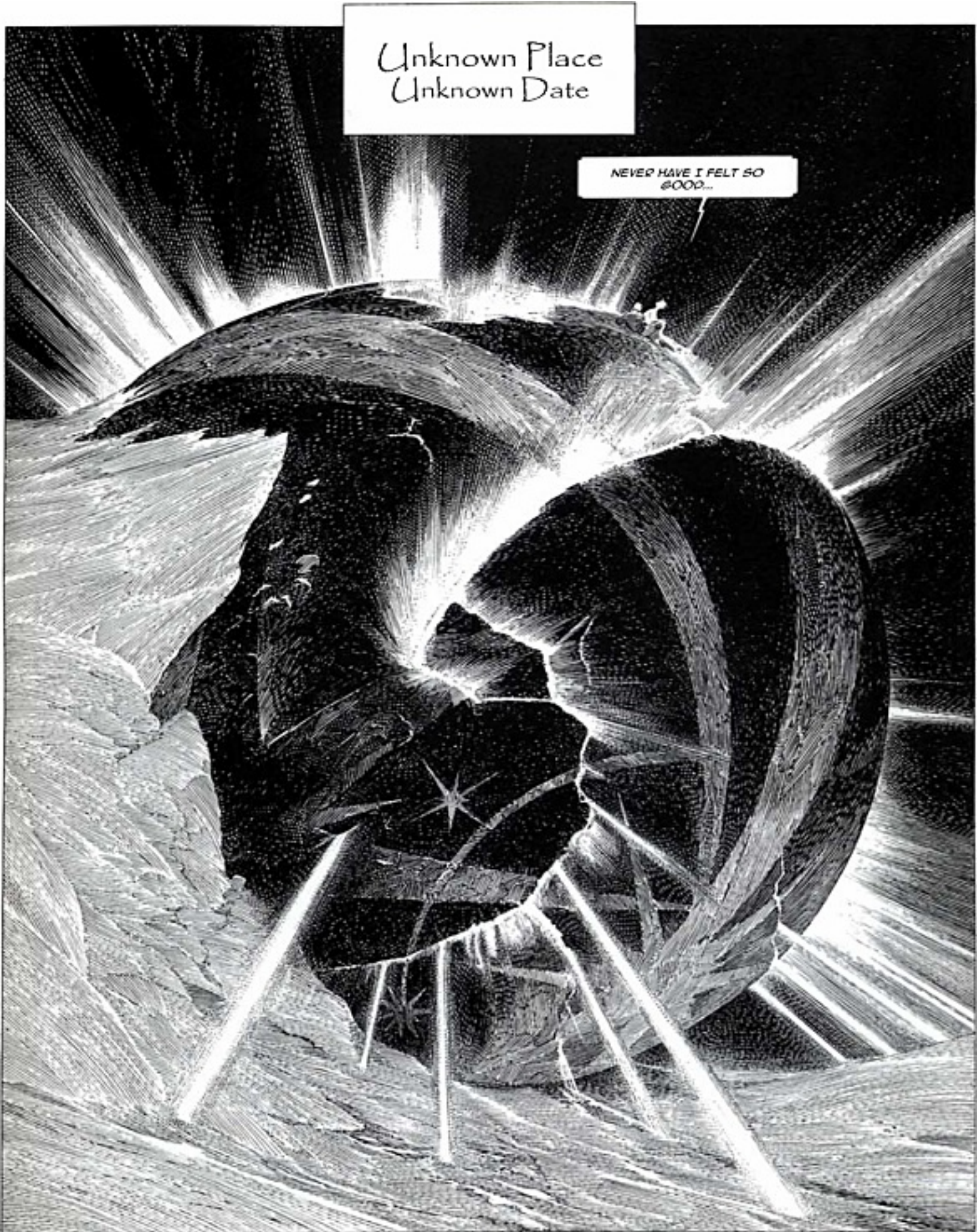


ONE MORE WORD... ALL THAT I'VE SAID TO YOU MUST REMAIN OUR SECRET. OUR TWO WORLDS ARE NOT YET READY TO DISCOVER THAT THEY ARE GOVERNED BY INVISIBLE POWERS.



Unknown Place
Unknown Date

NEVER HAVE I FELT SO
GOOD...





IT'S FUNNY, I THOUGHT I WAS ATTRACTED BY ANOTHER WORLD...



PERHAPS NOTHING ELSE EXISTS ANY LONGER,
PERHAPS WE'RE ALL THAT'S LEFT...



YOU'RE NOT SAYING ANYTHING,
AUGUSTIN... WHAT ARE YOU THINKING
ABOUT?

ABOUT YOU... ABOUT YOUR PORTRAIT THAT I COULDN'T FINISH...
NOW I'M SURE THAT I COULD BRING IT OFF...



I COULD DRAW ALL OF YOUR FEATURES FROM MEMORY...



WHAT GOOD ARE IMAGES...



FORGIVE ME!

BUT IT'S OKAY, DON'T WORRY!



MARY! MARY!

UHH... I'M HERE...



ALL THE WAY UP THERE! AND HOW CAN I GET UP THERE?

WHO IS IT?... YOUR FATHER?



IT'S WAPPENDORF... A SCIENTIST... I HAD COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN ABOUT HIM.



IT'S SLIPPERY... THERE'S NO WAY TO GET UP THERE...



WHAT CAME OVER ME TO BRING THIS GIRL? I MUST HAVE BEEN AN IDIOT!!!



AH, I'VE DONE SOME STUPID THINGS, BUT THIS REALLY TAKES THE CAKE!!!



SO...MARY... WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? YOU DISAPPEAR LIKE THAT WITHOUT ANY WARNINGS.

BUT, NOT AT ALL, I TOLD YOU THAT...



NO BUTS!... AND YOU, SIR, WHOM I'VE NOT HAD THE HONOR TO MEET...

MY NAME IS DESOMBRES.
AUGUSTIN DESOMBRES.



AH, YOU'RE THE PAINTER!... GOOD... WELL,
MARY, I THINK YOU NEED TO BID FAREWELL TO
THIS GENTLEMAN. WE MUST HURRY UP AND GET
BACK.



COME NOW, COME NOW, THAT'S
RIDICULOUS... YOU HARDLY KNOW
ONE ANOTHER...

IT'S RIDICULOUS PERHAPS,
BUT THAT'S HOW IT IS. I WANT
TO LIVE WITH HIM.



NO ONE CAN LIVE HERE. EVERYTHING HAS TO
GO BACK INTO ORDER, EVERYTHING HAS TO
TAKE ITS NORMAL COURSE.



I DON'T WANT TO GO BACK. I WANT TO STAY
HERE WITH AUGUSTIN... IT'S THE FIRST TIME I
FEEL GOOD ABOUT MYSELF.



WHAT DOES "NORMAL" MEAN? MY MOTHER IS
NORMAL, MY BROTHER IS NORMAL. I HAVE NO
DESIRE TO BE LIKE THEM



WHEN I STARTED LEARNING, I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND RIGHT AWAY HOW LUCKY I WAS. I FELT UNHAPPY, EXCLUDED... BUT NOW, I'VE DISCOVERED ALL THAT IT BROUGHT TO ME.



LISTEN, MARY, THE FACT THAT YOU LEAN EVERYWHERE EXCEPT HERE IS AN ENIGMA THAT SCIENCE WILL SURELY RESOLVE ONE DAY...



AN ENIGMA? YOU, MR. WAPPENDORF, YOU SEE ENIGMAS EVERYWHERE, BUT YOU NEVER LIVE ANYTHING!



WHAT DO YOU MEAN NOTHING? AND THE CELESTIAL SHELL, THAT WAS PROBABLY NOTHING? AND THE VESSEL OF THE DESERT, IT WASN'T ANYTHING EITHER!



MACHINES, THAT'S ALL YOU KNOW! BUT LIFE, YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS!



TO LOVE...
HAVE YOU EVER LOVED ANYONE?

HOW YOU HAVE CHANGED, MY LITTLE MARY, I NO LONGER RECOGNIZE YOU...



COME, MR. DESOMBRES, WE HAVE TO TALK SERIOUSLY...

DON'T GO, AUGUSTIN, DON'T LISTEN TO HIM!



THE GIRL IS UPSET, UNABLE TO UNDERSTAND MY EXPLANATIONS. BUT THE SITUATION IS SERIOUS, MR. DESOMBRES, YOU MUST BELIEVE ME...



A FEW HOURS AGO, I MET A NATIVE OF YOUR WORLD, A MR. VERNE.

VERNE?... JULES VERNE?



YES, THAT'S HIS NAME... MR. VERNE SPOKE TO ME ABOUT ONE OF YOUR PAINTINGS. BY SOME MECHANISM THAT ESCAPES US, IT IS LIKELY THAT YOUR PAINTINGS ARE THE CAUSE OF ALL THAT'S HAPPENED.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND. WHERE ARE YOU FROM?



FROM FAR AWAY... FOR US, WE HAD TO ACCOMPLISH THE TRIP ON A PHYSICAL LEVEL, BY THE HEAVY METHOD, I DARE SAY. FOR YOU, EVERYTHING WAS MENTAL. IT'S YOUR ART, YOUR PAINTINGS WHICH PERMITTED YOU TO PASS OVER...



YOU ARE A VISIONARY, MR. DESOMBRES, A VISIONARY OF FEARFUL POWER. OUR LIVES ARE AFFECTED BY WHAT YOU'VE PAINTED... YOU COULD PROVOKE CATASTROPHES.



IT'S FRIGHTENING. BUT I ASSURE YOU THAT...

I KNOW, YOU ARE ENTIRELY IGNORANT OF YOUR POWER. BUT NOW, YOU KNOW... COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE TWO WORLDS MUST BE PUT TO AN END. YOU MUST GO HOME.



ONE THING SEEMS CLEAR TO ME. IT'S YOUR PAINTING WHICH IS THE ORIGIN OF WHAT'S HAPPENED, YOUR PAINTING ALONE CAN RESOLVE THE PROBLEM WHICH WE ARE DISCUSSING.

I UNDERSTAND, I BELIEVE I KNOW WHAT MUST BE DONE.

WHAT DID HE SAY TO YOU?



DO YOU SEE THAT GLEAM ALL THE
WAY DOWN THERE? THAT'S WHERE I
CAME FROM...

I DON'T SEE ANYTHING.

BUT YES, LOOK, THERE!



YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND ME, MARY...
IT WON'T BE LONG.

IT'S NOT TRUE! IF YOU LEAVE, I KNOW THAT
YOU WON'T COME BACK.



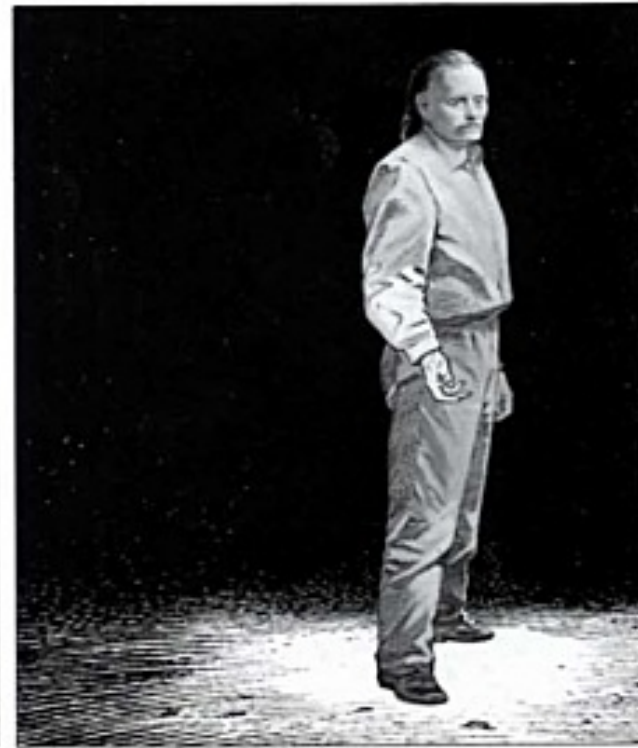
TRUST ME, MARY...

NO!...



NO, I WAS MISTAKEN. IN THE END,
YOU WERE LIKE ALL THE OTHERS...

YOU'RE AN OLD MAN.



Augustin!



AUGUSTIN!



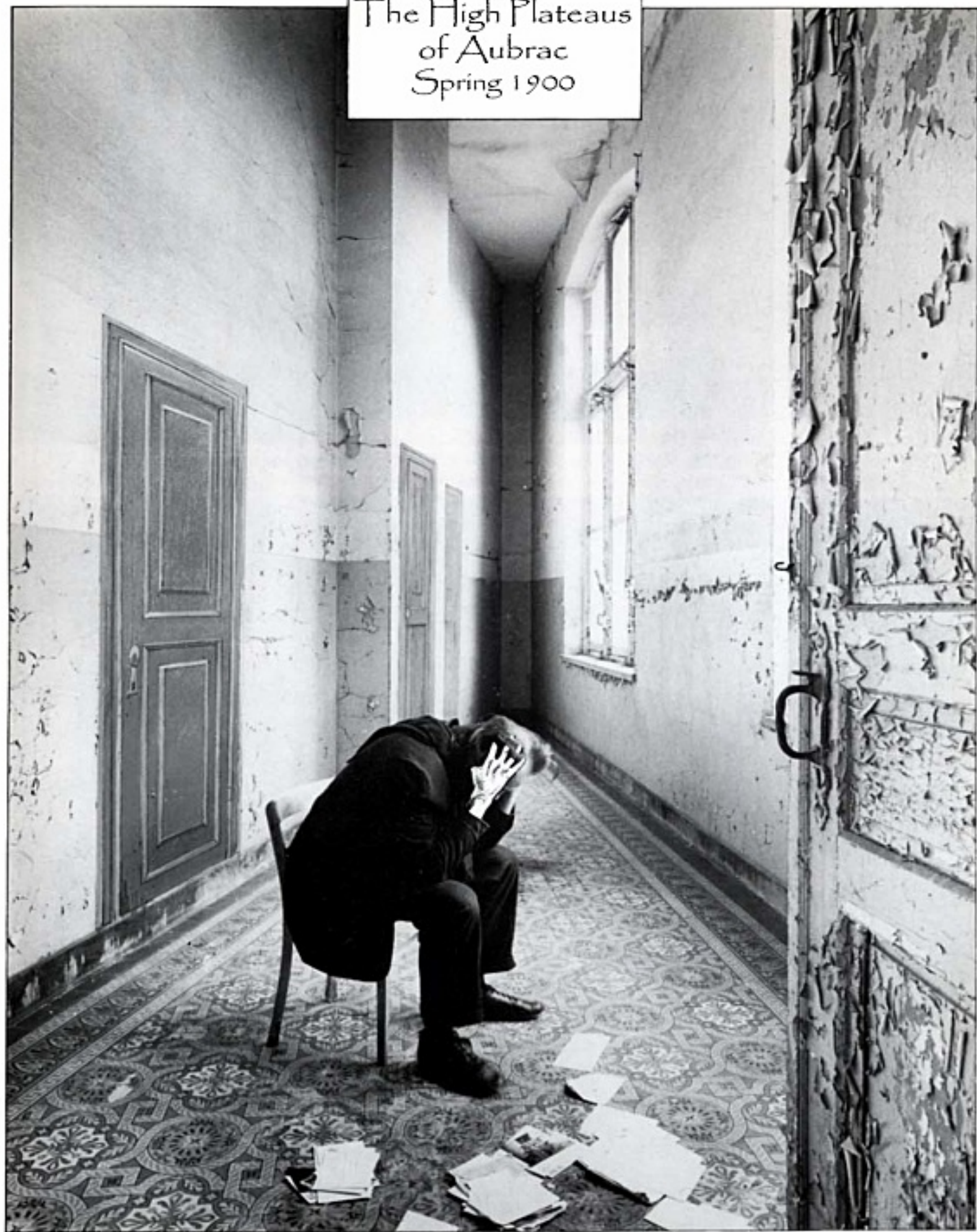
Augustin...



COME, MY LITTLE MARY, A
LONG ROAD AWAITS US!



The High Plateaus
of Aubrac
Spring 1900





*I found myself in the hallway again, my legs weak, my heart beating at a breakneck speed.
If my hand weren't so strangely secured, I'd swear that I'd dreamed it all.*



*I'm in no pain, but these lines frighten me. It's like a stigmata, the visible sign of my treachery.
I will rub my hand as long as it takes to make them disappear.*





*It's no use. I carry the indelible trace of that moment when Mary took my hand to hold it in hers.
As if this meeting had marked me with a red-hot iron.*



*In the end, Mary, I am happy to not be unscathed, to keep this mark of you, this memory inlaid
in my skin. I realize now how stupid I was to come back.*





Painting bores me... I'm working like an automaton to change my frescoes. The brushes run by themselves over the walls. Why did I listen to that Wappendorf? Why did I not stay by your side?



Your sphere has retaken its place amongst the others. The fissures and crevasses have closed up. Everything has returned to order.



I no longer hear anything. I no longer feel anything... soon, I'm going to leave. I'm going to shut the door of this house forever. I'm going to walk straight away.



I hate myself, Mary. You can't know how I hate myself.



Green Lake
May 24th, 760
20:50

THIS FESTIVAL COMES AT THE RIGHT TIME! MYLOS HAS TRULY GOTTEN ALL ITS GRANDEUR BACK.

IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN, YOU'RE AXEL WAPPENDORF...

IT'S EXTRAORDINARY, SHE HAS SUCCEEDED IN GATHERING EVERYONE THAT MATTERS ON THE CONTINENT.

SHE'S A REMARKABLE WOMAN!

WHAT ENERGY!

AND WHAT CLASS...

147

AND WHAT CLASS...



THE MOST ASTONISHING PART IS THAT SHE HAS SUCCEEDED IN LIBERALIZING WITHOUT FALLING INTO ANARCHY.

GOOD EVENING, MARY... UHH, EXCUSE ME, MRS. VON RATHEN.



YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED, AXEL, THE YEARS HAVE NO HOLD ON YOU.

YOU SAY THAT, MARY, BUT...



COME, AXEL, WE'LL HAVE MORE QUIET TO TALK!





WHEN I THINK THAT IT'S BEEN
ALMOST TEN YEARS SINCE
LAST I SAW YOU...



ARE YOU STILL ANGRY WITH ME, MARY?

NO, YOU WERE PROBABLY RIGHT, IN
YOUR OWN WAY...



I FOLLOWED YOUR ADVICE,
AXEL. I BEHAVED LIKE A
RESPONSIBLE AND ADULT
PERSON. I TOOK UP MY
FATHER'S PLACE HEADING
MYLOS... POOR PAPA, I'D HAVE
NEVER THOUGHT HE LOVED ME
SO MUCH! I HAVE ATTEMPTED TO
SOFTEN THE ORDER OF THINGS...



PEOPLE SAY YOU'VE DONE WONDERS.

OH, I'M FAR FROM HAVING SUCCEEDED IN
EVERY RESPECT, BUT I THINK I'VE
BROUGHT SOME IMPROVEMENTS.



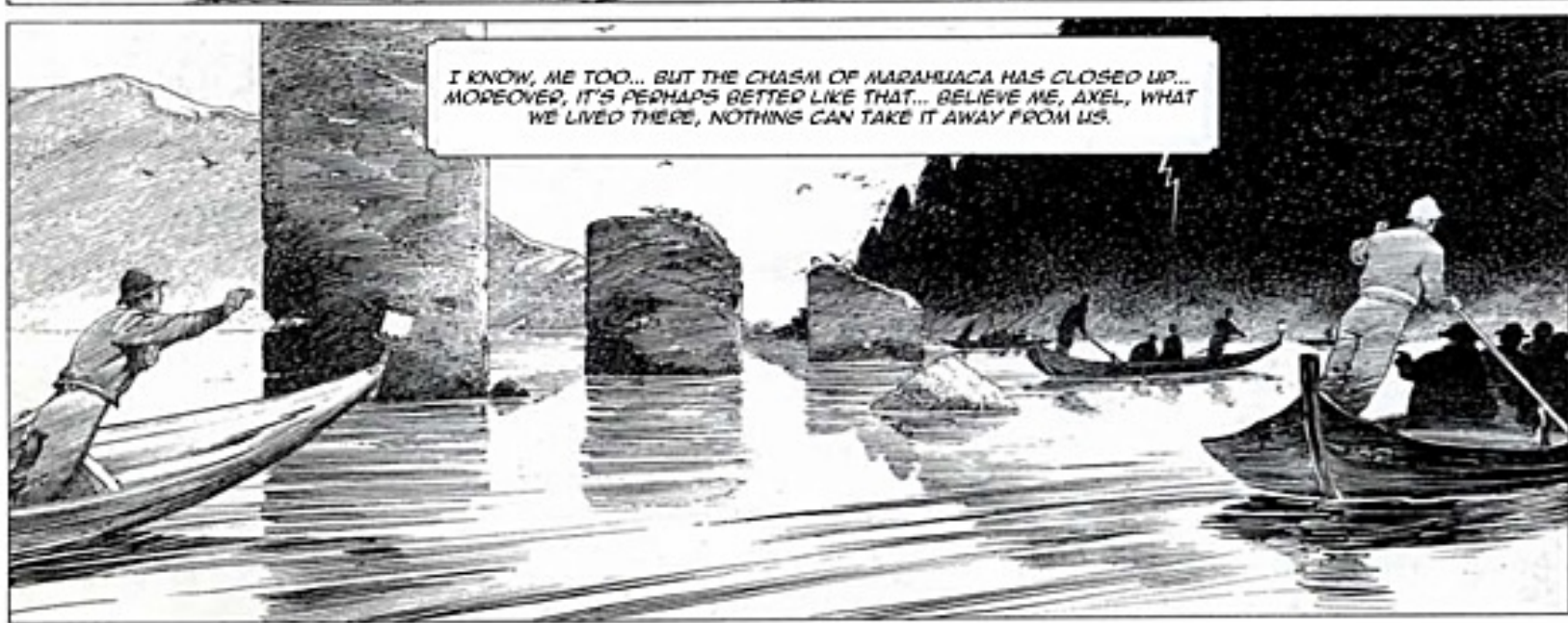
YES, AXEL, I'VE DONE WHAT YOU CALLED MY DUTY. AND YET, EACH DAY, I THINK ABOUT MY AUGUSTIN AGAIN AND THE TIME WHEN I USED TO LEAN...



YOU KNOW PERHAPS THAT MY STORY HAS BECOME A TALE TO LULL CHILDREN TO SLEEP. BUT FOR ME, IT'S STILL AS REAL, AS PRESENT...



ME, TOO, I HAVE NEVER STOPPED THINKING ABOUT IT... IN ALL THESE YEARS, I HAVEN'T INVENTED THE LEAST VEHICLE. IT'S FUNNY, THAT NO LONGER AMUSES ME... DO YOU WANT TO KNOW, MARY, THAT I EVEN TRIED TO RETURN THERE!



I KNOW, ME TOO... BUT THE CHASM OF MARAHUACA HAS CLOSED UP... MOREOVER, IT'S PERHAPS BETTER LIKE THAT... BELIEVE ME, AXEL, WHAT WE LIVED THERE, NOTHING CAN TAKE IT AWAY FROM US.

